A STUDY

OF

AN APOLOGETICALL NARRATION (1643/4)

WITH PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN PURITANISM AND NEW ENGLAND AND DUTCH CONGREGATIONALISM TO THE RISE OF THE "CONGREGATIONAL WAY" IN ENGLAND IN THE 1640S AND 1650S

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XUCHU XU

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ABSTRACT

A Study of An Apologeticall Narration (1643/4) with particular consideration of the contributions of Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism and New England and Dutch Congregationalism to the rise of the "Congregational way" in England in the 1640s and 1650s.

Xuchu Xu
New College
Edinburgh University
Master of Philosophy
August 1994

This thesis is a study of the "Congregational way" in England as briefly presented by the "five dissenting brethren" in the Apologeticall Narration (1643/4). It sets out to analyse how the "congregational" impulse in Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism, the Congregational propaganda in New England, and the Congregational experiment and liberal thought in Holland concurred to bring about the Congregational churches in the England of the 1640s and 1650s. The introduction presents the full historical milieu or context that produced the dissenting brethren's apologia. The first chapter deals with the Congregationals' view of church membership and their debate with the Presbyterians on the admission issue. The second chapter assesses their attitudes towards the state and the mainline churches (the Church of England and Reformed Churches) and examines their church worship and ministry. The third chapter looks at their view of church government or discipline and their debate with the Presbyterians on church order. The fourth chapter investigates their protological and eschatological understanding of the church. The final chapter explores their belief in the soteriological significance of churchmanship; this is followed by the analysis of their theory of religious toleration, which had its origins in Holland, and their "denominationalism". The conclusions of the above chapters concerning the tenets and roots of the Congregational way are drawn together in the general conclusion, in which there is also a brief survey of the rise of the Congregational churches in the England of the 1640s and 1650s, and a short discussion of the impact of the apologia on both Cromwell's religious policy in England and Locke's theoretical defence of religious toleration.

To the Church in China

PREFACE

My interest in church polity was first kindled as a Seminary student through Rev Zheming Chen, Dean of the Union Theological Seminary and rector of St Paul's in Nanjing, China, who encouraged students to do some research on church polity in the interests of the reconstruction of the post-denominational Church in China. After I came to Scotland, that interest somehow deepened into something of a passion, particularly for the church polity as discussed by the puritans in Tudor and Stuart England, under the supervision of Dr Susan Hardman Moore, an expert on puritanism, during the year of my non-graduate study in Edinburgh. One of the reasons why I had that passion for the study of puritan view of the church was that the puritans are said to have made an original contribution to the doctrine of the church. As R.S Paul points out, the puritans, in their English context, probed ecclesiology more deeply and experimented with it "more radically and more extensively than anywhere else in Europe".[1] My greatest debt in choosing the present topic for study is to Dr Susan Hardman Moore, who suggested the focus of my M.phil study on the Congregational tract, An Apologeticall Narration submitted to the Long Parliament by five Congregational churchmen in 1643/4.

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1. R.S. Paul, A Way to wyn them", in B.A. Gerrish (ed.), Reformatio Perennis (Pittsburgh, 1981), 92f.

So far two areas in puritan studies have been largely neglected. One is that no great attention has as yet been given by any scholar to the study of the content of the Apologeticall Narration. In 1963, R.S. Paul produced his Apologeticall Narration (1644) -- a full historical introduction to the tract, which sets it within its historical context to the end that the reading of the text itself will be made more intelligible -- and expressed the hope that a fuller account of this very significant tract in Congregational history would appear before long from somebody's pen.[1] The other neglect is that there have been few treatments of the "Congregational way" in its wider scope. While Dr G.F. Nuttall explored the Congregational way in his Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660, he did not venture to trace its ecclesiological roots, nor did he attempt to relate it to the transatlantic "New England way". In view of these areas of neglect, the purpose of the present study is twofold. First, it attempts to explore and evaluate the various ecclesiological ideas proper to the "Congregational way" in the Apologeticall Narration. Secondly, it seeks to trace these ideas to Elizabethan and Jacobean nonconformity. (It deserves notice that many of the most characteristic positions of the Congregational way were actually anticipated by Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism. For some of the puritans came to identify the true church with those who were visibly godly and covenantedly gathered, and came almost to separate themselves from the world -- a process which gave rise to the Congregational churches both in New England in the 1630s and in England in the 1640s; as has been shown in Professor Patrick Collinson's works, such as The Elizabethan Puritan

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1. R.S. Paul, An Apologeticall Narration (1644) (Philadelphia, Boston, 1963), iii-iv.

Movement and The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625.) This study also tries to relate these ideas to New England Congregationalism and the Dutch Congregational experiment. (It merits notice that the rise of the Congregational churches in the England of the 1640s and 1650s resulted in part from the Congregational experiment in Holland, and in part from the propaganda of New England Congregationals.) For these reasons, the perimeters of the present study include not only works of contemporary divines, particularly works relating directly to the Apologeticall Narration, in both England and New England, but also relevant writings of the Elizabethan and Jacobean divines. My wish is that the present study would fill the above-mentioned gaps. It will also explore briefly how the Apologeticall Narration influenced the later development of Congregationalism, and particularly how the Congregational advocacy of religious toleration had a bearing on both the development of religious toleration in Cromwellian England and John Locke's theoretical defence of religious toleration.

The thesis has been organised around five ecclesiological themes -- all based on the ecclesiological ideas revealed in the Apologeticall Narration. The first chapter deals with the Congregationals' view of church membership and their debate with the Presbyterians on the admission issue. The second chapter assesses their attitudes towards the state and the mainline churches and examines their church worship and ministry. The third chapter looks at their view of church government and their debate with the Presbyterians on church order. The fourth chapter investigates their protological and eschatological understanding of the church. The final chapter explores their belief in the soteriological significance of churchmanship and analyses their toleration theory. Although this

study is primarily ecclesiological, it does not mean that historical elements are excluded. In fact, the introduction and conclusion seek to set the Apologeticall Narration in its full historical context. The thesis is therefore both a work of ecclesiastical history and a work of historical theology; the two can never be separated. For clarity's sake, I have employed the thematic approach throughout the thesis.

In order to let the reader listen to distant voices, I have retained the historicity of the primary sources: the original spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, and use of italics, except where the quotation is from a modernised edition and where change was necessary to make the sense clearer. (Alterations of the original text are indicated by the use of square brackets.) I have also retained the original capitalisation of the book titles. Full titles of the primary sources cited are by and large included in the bibliography, not in the notes, where in the interests of brevity short titles have commonly been used throughout. All books cited were published in London unless otherwise stated. Dates in the thesis are according to the old style calendar used in England till 1752, in which the year began on 25 March. To avoid confusion, dates up to 1752 from 1st January to 24th March will be styled (e.g.) 1643/4.

Finally, I owe my sincere thanks to the China Christian Council and Nanjing Union Theological Seminary for sending me to Scotland for further study; to the staff of the China Study Project in the British Council of Churches (now the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland) for their concern with my study; to the Department of World Mission and Unity of the Church of Scotland for their financial support of my study; to the parish church at Inverness for their timely financial contribution; to Mrs Dot Stone and her husband Rev Godfrey Stone, who was a tutor at Wycliffe Hall and is now rector of a

parish church in Stoke-on-Trent, for kindly providing for my family free accommodation in Oxford; to my former supervisor, Dr Susan Hardman Moore, now lecturer at King's College, London University, and my present supervisor, Mr David F. Wright, formerly Dean of the Faculty, for their valuable suggestions, critical supervisions, and constant encouragement; to the librarians of New College Library in Edinburgh and the Bodleian Library and Mansfield College Library in Oxford, who readily offered their assistance; to Rev Arnold Lee, formerly vicar at St Andrew's, Oxford, for his proofreading of my work in advance of its submission; to my wife for her suffering my puritan obsession for so long and for looking after our two little ones, Weili and Musheng. It is clear enough that without the help and support of the above-mentioned churches and people, this thesis could never have been written.

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New College
Faculty of Divinity
University of Edinburgh

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AN: Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes & William Bridge, An Apologeticall Narration, Hvmbly Svbmitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament (1643).

Anta.: Thomas Edwards, Antapologia, or A Full Answer to the Apologetical Narration (1644).

BDBR: Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century, eds. Richard Greaves & Robert Zaller (Brighton, 1982-1984).

CGCC: Richard Mather, Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discvssed, in an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New England to two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England, declare their judgments therein (1643 [written in 1639]).

CH: Church History.

CS: Stephen Brachlow, The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570-1625 (Oxford, 1988).

Diss.: Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time: wherein the Tenets of the principall Sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together in one Map (1645).

DNB: Dictionary of National Biography.

DP: Keith Sprunger, Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Leiden, 1982).

GP: Patrick Collinson, Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism (Bodmin, Cornwall, 1983).

Inst.: John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. J.T. McNeill, trans. F.L. Battles (1960).

JD: J.R. De Witt, Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government (Kampen, 1969).

JEH: Journal of Ecclesiastical History.

JLJ: John Lightfoot, The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines From January 1, 1643, to December 31, 1644, in The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, ed. J.R. Pitman, XIII (1824).

LAL: Theodore Dwight Bozeman, To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism (The University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

LJ: The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh, 1841).

MWD: Michael Watts, The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution (Oxford, 1978).

TCHS: Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society.

TS: Murray Tolmie, The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616-1649 (Cambridge, 1977).

VS: G.F. Nuttall, Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660 (Oxford, 1957).

WCCNE: John Cotton, The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England, or the VVay of Churches walking in Brotherly equalitie, or co-ordination, without Subjection of one Church to another (1645).

WTG: The Works of Thomas Goodwin (1681-1704).

WWB: The Works of the Rev. William Bridge (1845).

ZE: Thomas Goodwin, Zervbbabels Encovragement to Finish the Temple: A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons (1642).

"Doe not shew me by mens Opinions, but Divine Scriptures, what the Church is (saith Austine.) Their testimonie is not Canonicall, but Historicall; not a Rule of what is to be, but a report of what hath beene."

"Set up the Word, that is Christs Saepter...: Let it not be said, Thus saith Austine; but, Thus saith the Lord. The Spirit of God hath made no promise to a Councell, or Synod of Bishops: How many Errors are there in the Fathers Writings? How often doe they contradict themselves, and one another? Which of them doth not often wrest the Scriptures?"

------- Sidrach Simpson, A Sermon Preached at Westminster Before Sundry of the House of Commons (16 October 1643), 30, 33.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

In the history of the Christian Church, the 17th century was "a contentious, dividing Age",[1] during which controversies raged over matters of doctrine, polity, and worship.[2] None the less, "by striking the flint is beaten out fire" and "from collision of opinions resulteth truth."[3] Similarly, through decades of debates in England over the issues of the church developed the "Congregational way" as seen in both New England (1633-62) and England (1640-62), which in time enriched Christian ecclesiology.

I. The Question on the Historiography and Genealogy of Congregationalism

For a long time, church historians were unable to solve the thorny problem of the historiography and genealogy of Congregationalism. Congregational historians like R.W. Dale and Albert Peel traced Congregationalism to Elizabethan and Jacobean Separatism. To them,

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1. Richard Baxter, Universal Concord (1660), title page.

2. This was to be seen in the alignment of Protestants against Romanists, of Lutherans against Calvinists, of Calvinists against Arminians, of puritans against both diocesan prelatists and radical Separatists, of Scottish Presbyterians against English Episcopalians, and of Congregationals against Presbyterians.

3. Jeremiah Burroughes, Irenicum, to the Lovers of Truth and Peace (1646), 62; Samuel Rutherford, The Due right of Presbyteries (1644), "To the Reader".

Congregationalism arose almost simultaneously with Separatism.[1] Denying this, Champlin Burrage was the first historian to argue that the "beginnings of Independency or Congregationalism are not traced to the Brownists... but to the Congregational Puritanism advocated by Henry Jacob and William Bradshaw." Following Burrage, Perry Miller held the similar view that Congregationalism began with the "Non-Separating Congregationalists", such as Henry Jacob, William Bradshaw, William Ames, Robert Parker, and Paul Baynes.[2] But Burrage and Miller both anachronistically distinguished Jacobean "Congregationalism" from Elizabethan "Presbyterianism", and consequently failed to see the continuity of ecclesiological ideals between them. It seems as if Jacobean "Congregationalism" fell from the skies.[3]

The correctness of Burrage and Miller's predating Congregationalism in pre-revolutionary England has been questioned by the theses of G.F. Nuttall, E.S. Morgan, and Patrick Collinson. Dr Nuttall points out that the so-called "Non-Separating Congregationalists" before 1640 were not genuinely and coherently

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1. R.W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism (1907), 95, 385; Albert Peel, The First Congregational Churches: New Light on Separatist Congregations in London 1567-81 (Cambridge, 1920), 47.

2. Henry Jacob (1563-1624) was elected pastor of the gathered church at Southwark in 1616. Five years later, he resigned his pastorate and then migrated to Virginia. William Bradshaw (d.1618) was suspended in 1617 from rectorship for his refusal to subscribe the canons. William Ames (1576-1633) was made Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1601. He migrated to Holland in 1610 and was named Professor of Theology in Franeker University in 1622. He was a strict Calvinist. Robert Parker (d.1614) was deprived of his benefice in 1607. After that, he escaped to Holland. Paul Baynes (d.1617) was appointed lecturer at St Andrew's, Cambridge, on the death of William Perkins. For these five nonconformists, see BDBR.

3. Champlin Burrage, The Early English Dissenters: in the light of Recent Research (1550-1641), I (Cambridge, 1912), 33, 281, 287, 292; Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650: A Genetic Study (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), 73-101.

"Congregational". He suggests that they were the puritans who directly influenced later Congregationals. According to Morgan, there were no clear-cut groupings such as "Independents" and "Presbyterians" before 1640. He argues rather that "it is possible to detect individuals who lived and wrote in the 16th and early 17th centuries as leaning either toward Independency [Congregationalism] or toward Presbyterianism." In his essay, "Towards a Broader Understanding of the Early Dissenting Tradition", Professor Collinson contends that congregationalism did not appear as a denomination in pre-revolutionary England; it was rather enveloped in the voluntary religious life in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church.[1] All these theses show that Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism only contained "Congregational" elements.

More recently, Stephen Brachlow argues, in his study of puritan ecclesiology in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, that Jacobean "congregationalists" derived their ecclesiology from Elizabethan "presbyterians", and that they both had a shared ecclesiological ideal. Thus, ecclesiologically, the former did not discover something new, but simply clarified and developed what had been vague and undeveloped in the writings of their Elizabethan predecessors. It could be true that Elizabethan puritans were "presbyterians", and Jacobean puritans "congregationalists". None the less, the former can hardly be spoken of as thoroughgoing "Presbyterians"; neither can the latter be portrayed as downright "Congregationalists". They were in no sense denominationally fixed, due -- to quote Collinson -- to the "dynamic, fluid and even paradoxical features of the religious

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1. VS, 7-14; E.S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (N.Y., 1963), 13; GP, 527-62.

situation" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.[1] As a matter of fact, the assumed "presbyterianism" of Elizabeth's day, Dr Brachlow reasons, bore within itself "the possibilities of development in more than one ecclesial direction". Hence it served as a fertile seed-bed, out of which grew Separatists first and "non-separating congregationalists" later on. The puritan polity, as a whole, was such a "rich and many-layered source" that, when the denominational era began in England, it "provided an ideology both Independents and Presbyterians could manipulate for historical support of their respective polities".[2]

The objection of modern scholarship to predating Congregationalism has provided the grounds on which the present study posits the rise of English Congregationalism in the early 1640s. In addition, Dr Brachlow's thesis that there was a certain undercurrent of "Congregationalism" in Elizabethan puritanism has prepared the ground for the study of an ecclesiological link from Elizabethan puritanism via Jacobean puritanism to Caroline Congregationalism.

II. "Five Dissenting Brethren" and the Apologeticall Narration

It could be argued that the birth of the mature Congregational way in England was marked by the publication of the first Congregational tract, An Apologeticall Narration, Humbly Submitted to the Honourable

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1. Patrick Collinson, "A Comment: Concerning the Name Puritan", JEH, XXXI (1980), 486.

2. CS, 11f, 16f, 208f; Stephen Brachlow, "The Elizabethan Roots of Henry Jacob's Churchmanship: Refocusing the Historiographical Lens", JEH, XXXVI (1985), 228f, 231.

Houses of Parliament (1643).[1] The tract concisely put forward the Congregationals' ecclesiastical programme. On this account, it can be regarded as the manifesto of English Congregationalism. Being a manifesto through which we can discover the raison d'étre of English Congregationalism, the Apologeticall Narration will be the focus of this study. But before our discussion of the tract proper, it is necessary for us to have some idea of its signers, their exile churches in Holland in the late 1630s, the events they witnessed and participated in in England between 1641 and 1643, and the situation that prompted them to issue the manifesto. A general knowledge of the content and the immediate consequences of the tract is also needed.

A. "Five Dissenting Brethren"

The signers on the title page of the tract are "Tho: Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jer: Burroughes, William Bridge", whom we call "five dissenting brethren". But the question is: who among the five did the actual writing? Based on the title of an anonymous tract, An Anatomy of Independency, or A Briefe Commentary... upon The Apologeticall Narration of Mr Thomas Goodwin, and Mr Philip Nye (1644) and on the fact that Goodwin and Nye had often jointly written short prefaces, for example, the preface to John Cotton's The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, Anthony Wood, the 17th-century biographer of outstanding Oxonians, believed that the tract "was written by Tho. Goodwin and Phil. Nye only".[2] If this is the case, then we should

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1. VS, 9-14.

2. Anthony Wood, Athenae Oxonienses: An Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops Who have had their Education in the most ancient and famous University of Oxford, II (1692), 370.

believe that the other three simply agreed to what Goodwin and Nye had written. Now a further question is raised: which of the two was the chief author? It is most likely that Goodwin had a chief hand in the tract. This is because: 1) his name appears at the top of the list of the five signers; 2) he was regarded as the leader of the five;[1] 3) he was a theologically-minded churchman and writer, while Nye was more a political activist than a theological writer;[2] 4) there are striking theological and literal resemblances between parts of the tract and Goodwin's fast-day sermon, Zervbbabels Encovragement.[3] Having ascertained that it was Goodwin who, assisted by Nye, created the tract to which the other three nodded assent, we shall now give an account of the lives of the five dissenting brethren, who were all nominated as members of the Westminster Assembly in April 1642.

We begin with Goodwin and Nye. Thomas Goodwin was born at Rollesby, Norfolk in 1600. He entered Christ's College, Cambridge in 1613 and received a B.A. in 1617. Later he moved to Catherine Hall and received an M.A. in 1620. Meanwhile he was chosen Fellow there and commenced his B.D. In 1628, he became lecturer, and then in 1632, vicar of Holy Trinity church, Cambridge. In 1633, Goodwin and Philip

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1. LJ, II, 123, 228. That Goodwin was the leader of the five has been argued by many scholars. For this, see W.K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, III (1932-8), 372; Horton Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Glasgow, 1948), 44; William Haller, "The Word of God in the Westminster Assembly", CH, XVIII (1949), 209; idem, The Rise of Puritanism (N.Y., 1957), 75; Berndt Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren: A Study on the Dutch Background of their Independentism (Lund, 1955), 45; VS, 13; TS, 106.

2. For Nye's political activities, see infra, 24, 243. See also Wood, op. cit., II, 370.

3. Infra, 221-9. See AN, 4, 10, 22f; ZE, 3, 12-9. Particularly compare AN, 4, 22 with ZE, 16f.

Nye visited John Cotton, who had been asked to answer for his nonconformity but had gone into hiding instead. They tried to persuade Cotton to the ceremonies of the Church, only to be convinced themselves of the necessity of nonconformity and the lawfulness of the Congregational way. In 1634, Goodwin resigned his vicarage and withdrew to London, where he lived obscurely. In 1639, threatened by the Laudian Church, he fled to Arnhem, Holland, where he and Nye joined the church that John Archer[1] had gathered. He returned home in early 1641. Two years later, he attended the Westminster Assembly. He left the Assembly in 1645 and composed "Of the Constitution of the Churches of Christ". In 1646-7, he lectured at St Michael's, Crooked Lane. After the execution of Charles I, Goodwin was appointed chaplain to the Council of State at Whitehall. In 1650, he was made by the Rump Parliament President of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he gathered a church. He preached regularly at St Mary's, the University church, in a "velvet cassock". Faced with the increasing radicalism in 1652-3, Goodwin worked for a reconciliation with the Presbyterians, abandoned the militant millenarianism now associated with Fifth Monarchism, denounced a Socinian catechism, and joined John Owen (1616-83), Dean of Christ Church and Vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, in preparing a defence of the University against anti-intellectualism. In 1653, he was made D.D. and one of the "Triers" for the approbation of ministers, and in 1654, an "Ejector" for the ejection of "scandalous" clergymen in ~~Oxon~~ Oxfordshire. Four years later, Goodwin attended Cromwell's deathbed, and then, together with Owen, Nye, Bridge, Joseph Caryl, and William Greenhill, the Savoy Conference, at which he helped draft the

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1. For John Archer, see infra, 213n.

Savoy Declaration. In 1659, he was appointed Fellow of Eton College. At the Restoration, he was ejected from his presidency of Magdalen College and withdrew to London, where he continued to write and preach under the trials of the Clarendon Code until his death in 1680. He was buried at Bunhill Fields, a nonconformist cemetery in London.

Philip Nye was born in Sussex in 1596. He entered Brasenose College, Oxford in 1615 and then moved to Magdalen Hall. In 1616, he received a B.A. and three years later, an M.A. In 1627, the Oxonian became curate of Allhallows, Staining, London, and later lectured at St Michael's, Cornhill. He went across to Holland in 1633 and ministered to the English congregation at Arnhem in 1639. After returning home in 1640, he became vicar of Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire. In May 1643, Nye pastored a gathered church composed of seven souls from Hull. On 20 July, Nye, together with Stephen Marshall, was sent to Scotland for military aid. One month after his return in late August, he was appointed to the rectory of Acton, Middlesex. From 1644, he held a lectureship at Westminster Abbey. In the Army debates with the Levellers at Whitehall in December 1648, Nye supported Henry Ireton's opposition to complete toleration.[1] When Cromwell was in power, he acted as his chaplain. In 1652, Nye, together with Owen and others, called for a church settlement by presenting first to the Rump and then to the Barebones' Parliament the Humble Proposals to which were appended 16 fundamentals of faith. Towards the end of the year, Nye cooperated with the Presbyterians in preserving tithes and a national church against the Fifth Monarchists. In 1654, he became both Trier and Ejector for Middlesex. He also received the rectory of St

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1. For this, see infra, 299.

Bartholomew, Exchange. In December 1656, he joined in persuading James Nayler to recant. After the Restoration, he advocated an occasional conformity. Nye died in 1672 and was buried in St Michael's, Cornhill.

The other three were Simpson, Burroughes, and Bridge, who joined Goodwin and Nye as the nucleus of the Congregationals in the Westminster Assembly. Sidrach Simpson was born circa 1600. He entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge as a sizar in 1616. After leaving the University, he held a curacy at St Margaret's, New Fish Street, London. In 1635, he offended the Laudians by a breach of the canon law. Two years later, he went to Holland and joined the exile church in Rotterdam, where Samuel Ward (d.1640) was pastor and Bridge the teacher. In 1639, he left the church, because of a disagreement with Bridge on preaching, and gathered a new one himself. He came back to England in 1641 and resumed his lectureship at St Margaret's. In 1650, he was appointed Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. Meanwhile, he became rector of St Mary Abchurch in London, a parish that he gathered on Congregational principles. In 1653, he moved to St Bartholomew, Exchange, and gathered a church there. He was also one of the 14 ministers nominated to draft "fundamentals" that were to be the basis of the Cromwellian Settlement and to define the limits of its toleration. In 1654, he became a Trier; but he was soon imprisoned in Windsor castle for preaching against Cromwell. He died in April 1655, and was buried in St Bartholomew's, Exchange.

Jeremiah Burroughes was born about 1600. He graduated B.A. in 1621 and M.A. in 1624 from Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In 1627, he began to lecture at Bury St Edmunds. It was not until 1634 that he became rector of Tivetshall, Norfolk. In 1637, owing to his participation in preaching exercises in Norwich, he was deprived by

Matthew Wren, Bishop of Norwich. In August 1638, he was offered hospitality for some months by the Earl of Warwick, a puritan sympathiser. Afterwards, he went to Holland and became a teacher in Bridge's church. Two years later, he came back to England, and held lectureships at Stepney (where he was the "morning star" and Greenhill the "evening star") and St Giles', Cripplegate. In November 1646, he fell from a horse and soon died of fever. Burroughes was a moderate Congregational, for he never attempted to "gather" a church.

William Bridge was born in Cambridgeshire in 1600. Having obtained his M.A. in 1626, he was made Fellow at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. In 1631, he entered into holy orders at St George Tombland, Norwich. After that, he often arranged for the Tombland lecture to be given in combination by several puritan ministers in Suffolk and Norfolk. In 1636, he was ejected from his benefice by Bishop Wren for his nonconformity and left for Holland, where he joined Hugh Peter's church at Rotterdam and became a teacher. In 1639, after Simpson left the church, he became pastor with the help of Burroughes. He returned to England in early 1641. He was appointed town preacher at Great Yarmouth in 1642. From September 1643 till 1661, Bridge ministered to a Congregational church at Great Yarmouth, a section of which was at Norwich. Besides, he was appointed lecturer at Stepney, Middlesex in December 1646. After the Restoration, he was ejected from preachership, and moved to Clapham, Surrey, where he founded a Congregational meeting. He died in Yarmouth in 1671.[1]

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1. For the five dissenting brethren, see BDBR and DNB. See also Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-62, ed. A.G. Matthews (Oxford, 1934), in which there is, however, no entry for either "Sidrach Simpson" or "Jeremiah Burroughes".

B. The Exile Churches in Holland in the Late 1630s

As mentioned above, the dissenting brethren all joined the exile churches in Holland in the late 1630s. What were their exile churches like?

Being the most tolerant, peaceful, and prosperous country in Europe, Holland drew many English dissenters, both Separatist and puritan, to take refuge there.[1] Hence there were a great number of exile churches in the Netherlands.[2] Among them, only two -- the Arnhem and Rotterdam churches -- concern this study.

Based on a covenant, the Arnhem church was founded in September 1638 by more than 100 English immigrants, who had come over to Holland because of the Laudian persecution and temporarily stayed at Viana and Utrecht in 1637. The congregation met in the choir of the Broederen Kerk, assigned to them by the Arnhem burgomasters. Although provided with a meeting place, they were financially self-supporting and hence freed from the supervision of magistrates and classis. The church was

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1. As early as 1576, Holland became the first European country where all sects, even Anabaptists, Romanists and Jews, were tolerated. This toleration was, however, interrupted by the disputes between Calvinists and Arminians in 1610. Eight years later, a Synod met at Dortrecht and concluded with the decree, confirmed by the States-General, that the Arminians be condemned. This caused 200 ministers to be deprived and 80 of them be banished. The persecution, however, did not last long. In 1625, Prince Maurice died. He was succeeded by Frederick Henry who was friendly to the Arminians; and under his rule, the Arminians returned home. They opened their own churches and set up their own colleges. Holland retained the old union of church and state, although it was in its mildest form: the clergy, elected by their congregations, made no attempt to interfere in civil affairs; the state supported the church, but had no intention of interfering with its doctrine or discipline. The religious toleration brought about a great advance in commerce, art, science, and letters. Holland was for a long period a haven for those who had been persecuted in their own respective countries. See T.W. Chambers, "Holland and Religious Freedom", American Society of Church History, V (1893).

2. DP, passim.

served by John Archer (beginning his pastorate at Viana in 1637), Goodwin, Nye (both teachers in 1639-40), and Henry Lawrence (ruling elder and lay preacher). All these preached "by turns". After 1640, almost all the leading members of the church, except Lawrence, hurried home. In 1642, Archer died; the church was thereupon left without ordained minister. The Arnhem church later developed Anabaptist tendencies against paedobaptism.[1]

The Rotterdam church was founded by a group of English settlers in 1619. The year following, the English congregation secured Thomas Barkely as their first pastor (serving until 1629) and met at St Peter's until 1632, when the city magistrates assigned them a wooden building known as a theatre. The church in the 1620s was, however, subject to the classis of Schieland. But this "Congregational classis", as R.P. Stearns terms it,[2] was transformed in 1633 by Hugh Peter (d.1660), one of the future "regicides", into a gathered covenanted church. Henceforth the church became independent of both classis and magistrates. In 1635, Peter, the teacher of the church, left for New England and was succeeded by John Davenport.[3] A year later, Davenport also sailed for America. With the mass arrival of the English exiles from Norfolk, among whom were Bridge and some wealthy families, the congregation grew considerably up to a membership of

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1. DP, 226-31.

2. R.P. Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands: The Rise and Fall of the English Congregational Classis 1621-35 (Chicago, 1940), 72. According to Dr Brachlow, this "congregational classis" was neither purely congregational, nor purely presbyterial in form, but had elements of both. See CS, 212f.

3. John Davenport (1597-1670) became vicar of St Stephen's, Coleman Street in London in 1624. After falling foul of the Star Chamber, he fled to Holland in 1634, and two years later, to New England, where he founded the Colony of New Haven in 1638. See BDBR.

1,000 or more. Now the church was pastored by Ward (1636-40), Burroughes (1639-41), and Bridge (1636-41) until they returned home in 1641.[1]

In January 1638/9, there arose serious differences in the Rotterdam church on the issue of "prophesying" -- "that the people on the Lords dayes should have liberty after the sermons ended, to put doubts and questions to the Ministers." Simpson, a private member of the church, supported it; whereas Bridge, the teacher, objected to it. Pastor Ward was sandwiched between them. Unhappy with Ward, the congregation deposed him for his siding against Bridge. They then chose Burroughes to replace him. The church was thus known as the "Bridge-Burroughes church". Protesting against this, Simpson withdrew from the church and set up a second church, assisted by Joseph Symonds. (The "Simpson-Symonds church" was a completely independent church, which received no government subsidy.) The act of deposing pastor Ward shocked the sister church at Arnhem, who were fully persuaded of Ward's integrity. Finding this deposition inconsiderate, they felt it their duty to intervene. Thus the church sent Goodwin, Nye, Lawrence, and another elder as messengers to Rotterdam. They met in a private house with some members of that faulty congregation. After the whole matter had been investigated, a "synod" of two independent congregations was called. Through the "brotherly advice and counsel", both parties admitted their errors and eventually

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1. DP, 162-8, 330.

reconciled one to another. The peace of the church was thus re-established.[1] The "synod" that Arnhem and Rotterdam churches had experimented with was thus believed to be successful.[2]

C. Events in England between 1641 and 1643

The 3rd of November 1640 saw the convening of the Long Parliament, which symbolised the outbreak of the English Revolution.[3] On 11 December, some 15,000 Londoners presented to the Commons the first

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1. "The Life of Dr. Thomas Goodwin; Compos'd out of his own Papers and Memoirs", WIG, V, xviii; Anta., 142; Diss., 76; DP, 169. It was not until 1643 that the first and second churches, under Robert Park (1641-49) and Joseph Symonds (1641-47), were reunited. See DP, 173.

2. Infra, 189ff.

3. In 1637, Charles I tried to anglicise the Scottish Kirk by imposing the slightly revised English Prayer Book on it. This caused great anger among the Scots, which led to the signing of the "National Covenant" in Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, in February 1638, a solemn bond to resist the innovations recently introduced into the Kirk. In December, the General Assembly at Glasgow deposed the bishops and re-established presbytery. Hence the Bishops' Wars in 1639-40. To raise money, Charles was compelled to call Parliament in April 1640. The old parliamentary grievances in politics and religion were at once presented, and Charles soon dissolved this "Short Parliament". In November 1640, the military successes of the Scots forced the king to summon Parliament again, thus precipitating the English Revolution. This Parliament (the "Long Parliament") lost no time in launching a fierce attack upon the king and the Laudians. See David Stephenson, The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters (Newton Abbot, 1973).

petition for the extirpation of episcopacy "root and branch".[1] In the following weeks, William Laud (d.1645), Archbishop of Canterbury and the ecclesiastical adviser of the king, was impeached for treason. And the 13 bishops who had participated in the making of the canons of 1640 were all kept apart for investigation.[2] These events cheered up the dissenting brethren. Soon afterwards, they left Holland one after another for their homeland, hoping that there would be a chance either of their persuading Parliament to adopt Congregational polity that they had experimented with in Holland or of their at least winning for themselves comprehension within the reformed Church of England. But what happened after they had returned home?

1. The inspiring situation in London in 1641

In late January 1640/1, the Long Parliament launched a campaign to uproot the ecclesiastical "innovations" of Laud and the other relics of "idolatry". Thus, Prayer Books in many parish churches were torn; altar rails, organs, and other trappings of Laud's "beauty of holiness" were destroyed; stone or wood carvings of angels and saints on roof bosses and images in stained glass were vandalised; and stone statues and ancient monuments were taken away. This was, however, the first round of sacrilege and iconoclasm.[3]

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1. Valerie Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-43 (Oxford, 1961), 212, 214.

2. John Morrill, The Nature of the English Revolution (1993), 81f; idem (ed.), The Impact of the English Civil War (1991), 33, 35.

3. Anthony Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War (1985), 109, 119; Morrill (ed.), op. cit., 54.

In March, the Smectymnuans, the "Anti-prelaticall party", raised a battle cry: "LET EPISCOPACY BE FOR EVER ABANDONED OVT OF THE CHVRCH OF GOD."[1] Probably in response to this, Parliament, on 5 July, impeached Bishop Wren of Ely, the persecutor of the puritan preachers in eastern fenland, and abolished the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission that had sought to crush William Prynne, Henry Burton, and John Bastwick.[2]

As the ecclesiastical powers became weakened with the opening of the Long Parliament, all sorts of "hedge-priests" were finding a favourable climate for spreading their respective beliefs.[3] Consequently the City of London was simply "Amsterdamnified".[4]

In the dissenting brethren's judgment, however, what had happened denoted a coming apocalyptic age. At a House of Commons fast in September, Burroughes rejoiced in his sermon that God, through His instruments, the Scots, had "opened a doore of hope".[5] In the same year, Goodwin published the millenarian sermon he had preached in Holland, A Glimpse of Syons Glory, in which he expressed the

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1. Smectymnuus, An Answer to a Book Entitvled, An Humble Remonstrance (n.p., 1641), 32. "Smectymnuus" was a pseudonym made of the initials of the five "Presbyterians", Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow.

2. DNB, s.v., "Matthew Wren"; Morrill (ed.), op. cit., 34, 41.

3. This was publicised by the water-poet, John Taylor's A Svvarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiqves (1641), which attacked the mechanic and tub preaching of the "ignorant persons", such as pedlers, weavers, feltmongers, tailors, butchers, cobblers, tinkers, and chimney-sweepers. See Fletcher, op. cit., 112, 119; TS, 35.

4. [John Taylor], The Anatomy of the Separatists, alias Brownists the factious Brethren in these times (1642), 1.

5. Jeremiah Burroughes, Sions Joy (7 September 1641), 25.

expectation that "as soon as ever this is done, that Antichrist is downe, Babylon [is] fallen, then comes in Jesus Christ reigning gloriously."[1]

2. The clash between Burton and Geree/Edwards (May - August 1641)

The year 1641 was the year when "the Disciplinary Controversie" was table-talk.[2] As early as the end of 1640, there had come out a tract entitled Christ on His Throne or, Christs Church-government briefly laid downe, which was probably composed by Henry Burton who had just been released from Guernsey.[3] It was the first important defence of Congregational discipline. However, what caused the most reaction in the disciplinary controversy was Burton's Protestation Protested (May 1641) which was a protest against the "Protestation" drafted by MPs on 3 May 1641, calling for "the true reformed Protestant religion expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England". It restated the central Congregational tenets of Christ on His Throne. It also pleaded for the toleration of particular congregations. For Burton, "the true reformed Protestant religion" and

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1. [Thomas Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory: or, the Churches Beautie specified (1641), 2. Although Paul Christianson attributes the authorship of this anonymous tract to Jeremiah Burroughes, still I accept J.F. Wilson's more convincing view that it was composed by Goodwin. See Paul Christianson, Reformers and Babylon: English apocalyptic visions from the reformation to the eve of the civil war (Toronto, 1978), 212-9, 251f; J.F. Wilson, "A Glimpse of Syons Glory", CH, XXXI (1962), 66-73.

2. Thomas Edwards, Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations (1641), "The Epistle Dedicatory".

3. Henry Burton (1578-1648) was one of the three anti-Laudian (anti-Arminian) heroes (see supra, 16). He became rector of St Matthew's, Friday Street, London in 1625. A decade later, he was tried and then imprisoned in Guernsey until late 1640. After he was released, he returned to his own parish church and converted it into a Congregational church in early 1643. See BDBR.

"the [established] Church of England" flat contradicted each other. Burton's tract spurred John Geree (d.1649) to publish his Vindiciae Voti, or A Vindication of the True Sense of the Nationall Covenant (1641) that defended the principle of a national church.[1] It also provoked Thomas Edwards (1599-1647), an arch-opposer of Independency, to produce his Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations (August 1641).[2] The Burton-Geree/Edwards controversy was but a preview of what was to come in 1643/4. No wonder that the moderate divines were apprehensive that this nascent clash would spread to hazard reformation, and urged the Congregationals to agree to a truce.

3. The agreement at Edmund Calamy's house (November 1641)

In November 1641, some "Presbyterians" met with Goodwin, Nye, Bridge, Burroughes, and Simpson at Edmund Calamy's house in Aldermanbury, London, where, with mutual consent, they entered into the engagement with one another that, for the sake of a united front against the common foe during the war time, they should not preach and publish against one another's ways.[3] The agreement was largely adhered

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1. MWD, 84, 86. For John Geree, see DNB.

2. Edwards' work in turn provoked Mrs Katharine Chidley to publish her retort to Edwards, The Ivstification of the Independent Chvrches of Christ (October 1641). For Edwards, see DNB. For Mrs Chidley, see infra, 166n.

3. Anta., 239-243.

to until the end of 1643.[1] This accounts for the relative lull in the tract war in the following two years, in which differences between Congregationals and "Presbyterians" were not quite clear-cut.

4. The initial stages of the Civil War (22 August 1642 - 30 June 1643)

In January 1642, the king made a vain attempt to arrest five MPs whom he accused of treason; this led eventually to the outbreak of the Civil War on 22 August, when the king commenced hostilities in Nottingham.[2] The first battle between Parliament and Crown was fought at Edgehill, Warwickshire, on 23 October 1642.[3] To the supporters of Parliament, the Civil War was a religious "crusade against Antichrist" as well as a political "struggle for parlimentary and legal liberties".[4] This in effect reflected the general demands of the English Revolution for decentralisation of power both in the church and in the state.[5]

The attitudes of MPs towards the war varied with the parliamentary parties they respectively belonged to: the peace party, the middle party, and the war party. The peace party, composed of the

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1. Lawrence Kaplan, "Presbyterians and Independents in 1643", The English Historical Review, LXXXIV (1969), 247f.

2. For the detailed discussion of the causes of the Civil War, see Ann Hughes, The Causes of the English Civil War (1991); Morrill, The Nature of the English Revolution, 252.

3. Robert Ashton, Reformation and Revolution 1558-1660 (1984), 310; Morrill (ed.), The Impact of the English Civil War, 14.

4. Derek Hirst, Authority and Conflict: England 1603-1658 (1986), 225. For the nature of the Civil War, see also Morrill, The Nature of the English Revolution, 33-40.

5. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Historical Essays (1957), 179-188, 195-205; idem, Religion, the Reformation and Social Change (1984), 46-89, 237-293, 345-391.

conservative lords and gentlemen, such as Denzil Holles (d.1680) and Sir Simonds D'Ewes (d.1650), distrusted Charles and were yet eager for peace at almost any price. Their defensive war aims centred on the hope that a demonstration of force would persuade the king to moderate.[1] The middle party included several peers, such as the Earl of Manchester (d.1671), Major General of the Eastern Association, the Earl of Warwick (d.1658), and Lord Saye and Sele (d.1662), both of whom were keen advocates of religious toleration.[2] Led by John Pym (d.1643), leader of Parliament, the middle party sought to maintain parliamentary unity and hence struck a proper balance between peace and war parties: they wanted peace on the one hand and prepared for war on the other.[3] The war party, whose leading figures were Henry Marten (d.1680), a radical republican as well as an opponent of Scottish influence and claims, Sir Arthur Haselrig (d.1661), and Cornelius Holland, favoured religious toleration and saw security only in the total destruction of the king.[4] Of them some were "Presbyterians", but the great majority were "political Independents".[5] It should be noted, however, that most MPs were moderate "Presbyterians" in the widest sense of that term.[6]

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1. Hirst, op. cit., 234.

2. For Manchester, see DNB. For Warwick and Lord Saye, see BDBR.

3. Hirst, op. cit., 234; Lawrence Kaplan, Politics and Religion during the English Revolution: The Scots and the Long Parliament 1643-1645 (N.Y., 1976), 4, 23; George Yule, The Independents in the English Civil War (Cambridge, 1958), 30.

4. For these radical revolutionaries, see BDBR.

5. Hirst, op. cit., 234; Yule, op. cit., 45; Kaplan, op. cit., 66. For "political Independents", see infra, 243, 243n, 298.

6. R.S. Paul, An Apologeticall Narration (1644) (Philadelphia, Boston, 1963), 74.

The war situation in 1643 was obviously unfavourable to the parliamentary forces. The events of June and July, it could be argued, marked the lowest ebb of the Roundheads' struggle against the Cavaliers. On 30 June, the Fairfaxes (Lord Fairfax and his son Sir Thomas [d.1671]) and their northern army were routed at Adwalton Moor in Yorkshire, which threatened the parliamentary heartland in East Anglia. On 13 July, Sir William Waller (d.1668) and his western army were beaten at Roundaway Down in Wiltshire. On the 26th, Bristol surrendered to Prince Rupert, the royalist general of the horse. The parliamentary hold on both the north and the southwest thus crumbled. All these shattered the parliamentarians' morale.[1]

It was probably the defeat of the Fairfaxes on 30 June that forced the parliamentarians, most of whom were no more sympathetic to Presbyterian than they had been to Laudian theocracy, to call immediately the Westminster Assembly of Divines that had been delayed for more than a year,[2] and consider the matter of an alliance with Scotland.[3] Evidently the reason why Parliament called the Assembly at this juncture was that they tried "to encourage Scottish intervention in the war".[4]

5. The opening of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1 July 1643)

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1. Ashton, op. cit., 313; Morrill (ed.), op. cit., 14. For Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir William Waller, see BDBR.

2. The bill for summoning the Assembly passed Parliament on 26 May 1642 and waited for the king's assent. However the outbreak of the Civil War made the calling of the Assembly considerably delayed.

3. Ashton, op. cit., 314f.

4. Kaplan, "Presbyterians and Independents", Review, LXXXIV, 246f.

On 1 July 1643, owing to the urgent need for Scottish assistance, Parliament called the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which opened with a membership of 151 (30 MPs, among whom was John Selden [d.1654], leader of the parliamentary Erastian party, and 121 divines). The divines were called to advise Parliament as to the establishment of a reformed church government.[1] The Assembly, with Dr William Twisse (d.1646) as its prolocutor, and Dr Cornelius Burges and John White its assessors, met at Henry VII Chapel in Westminster Abbey, although later in September it withdrew to the Jerusalem Chamber, a room next to the Abbey, because of the arrival of colder weather. The Assembly divines fell into four groups: 1) 30 Episcopalians (including James Ussher [d.1656], Archbishop of Armagh, and other bishops), none of whom actually attended the sessions, because of the king's prohibition, except Dr Daniel Featley, who was soon removed; 2) "Presbyterians", who constituted much the largest group, and whose leading divines included Stephen Marshall (d.1655), Lazarus Seaman (d.1675), Edmund Calamy (d.1666), Richard Vines, Thomas Gataker, Charles Herle (d.1659), Herbert Palmer, Matthew Newcomen, Thomas Young, Thomas Temple, Jeremiah Whitaker, George Walker, and others;[2] 3) a small group of Congregationals, composed of not only the "five dissenting brethren" who took a very prominent part in the Assembly's proceedings but also William Greenhill (d.1671), William Carter, Peter Sterry (d.1672), Joseph Caryl (d.1673), John Philips, John Green, and

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1. The Assembly was in the tradition of English Reformation; it was not a clerical-dominated assembly in the strict Scottish sense that possessed authority to legislate for the church, but a lay-dominated one that was in subservience to the state. See LJ, II, 186; Haller, "The Word of God", CH, XVIII, 205; JD, 18.

2. For all these Assembly divines, see DNB.

possibly Anthony Burges who were not active;[1] and 4) Erastians, represented by two divines, Thomas Coleman (d.1647), a learned Hebraist, and John Lightfoot (d.1675) who were convinced that ultimate disciplinary power must not rest in the hands of the clergy or an eldership, but in the hands of the godly civil magistrate.[2] In addition to these English divines, there would come on 15 September five clerical commissioners from Scotland: Robert Baillie (1599-1662), Professor of Divinity in and Principal of Glasgow University; Alexander Henderson (1583-1646), formerly the Moderator of Glasgow Assembly, but now Rector of Edinburgh University; Samuel Rutherford (1600-61), Professor of Divinity at St Mary's College, St Andrews; George Gillespie (1613-48), minister of Greyfriars, Edinburgh; and Robert Douglas of Edinburgh (never sat).[3] Though only representatives of the Kirk and unable to vote, they participated freely in the debates and hence exerted great influence on the Assembly.[4]

6. Anglo-Scottish Alliance and the Solemn League and Covenant (August - 25 September 1643)

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1. For Greenhill, Sterry, and Caryl, see BDBR. Greenhill and Carter, however, later joined the five dissenters and signed the published dissents of the Congregationals; while Philips and Caryl were still parochial Congregationals, and did not venture as far as the "gathered" church until 1649. See infra, 302, 271f, 275.

2. For John Lightfoot and Thomas Coleman, see DNB.

3. For these Scottish clergymen, see DNB.

4. JD, 17, 22, 27, 31ff, 45, 52, 75; R.S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate" (Edinburgh, 1985), 2, 68, 70, 105, 116f, 120, 124f, 127f, 135, 546-55; idem, An Apologeticall Narration, 44.

In August, Pym and his middle party, backed strongly by the war party, sent six commissioners, including Sir Henry Vane,[1] and two preachers at the Commons, Philip Nye and Stephen Marshall, to Edinburgh to negotiate the terms of an alliance.[2] However the price that the Scots demanded for military help was a religious league, which implicitly required their English brethren to establish their Church on the model of the Kirk.[3] Thus both Englishmen and Scotsmen engineered the Solemn League and Covenant, which was drafted by Henderson and to which Nye and Vane shrewdly added "according to the Word of God",[4] to the end that they might in future be able to resist the Scottish Presbyterian system on the pretext of the proviso, which they could interpret to mean something very different from Presbyterian government.[5] On 25 September, both Parliament and Assembly agreed to enter into the covenant with the Scots at a solemn meeting at St Margaret's, Westminster, and to impose this covenant

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1. For Sir Henry Vane, see infra, 243n.

2. Paul, Assembly, 88; idem, Narration, 69. See also infra, 243.

3. George Yule, "Some Problems in the History of the English Presbyterians in the Seventeenth Century", The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, XIII (1965), 9.

4. The first article of the Solemn League reads as follows: "THat we shall sincerely... endeavour... the reformation... in... England and Ireland, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God, and the Example of the best Reformed Churches, And shall indeavour to bring the Churches... in the three Kingdoms, to the neerest conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship and Catechizing...." See A Solemn League and Covenant (30 September 1643), 5. There is a subtle hint here that reform was to be conducted according to God's Word and the example of the best Reformed Churches that could include both more tolerant Dutch Church and less tolerant Scottish Kirk.

5. BDBR, s.v., "Philip Nye".

upon England.[1] The adoption of the covenant meant the entry upon the political and ecclesiastical scene in England of a strong Scottish influence.

The covenant could be seen as a best example of "Presbyterian"/Congregational co-operation, and as a major concession to Scottish pressure for a united church discipline according to their model. It should be noted, however, that both Congregationals and some "Presbyterians" accepted it simply because of the assumption that the covenant did not necessitate a wholesale copying of the Scottish way.

7. The Assembly meetings during the first three months: the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles (10 July - 12 October 1643)

Under John Pym, Parliament tried to create a state church in which both "Presbyterians" and Congregationals could be accommodated.[2] Hence Parliament, on 10 July, enjoined the Assembly to begin with the fairly non-controversial task of revising the Thirty-Nine Articles in a more Calvinistic direction.[3] At first, hopes for accommodation seemed justified, as discussions were conducted in relative quiet. The debates lasted until 12 October, when the Assembly had to turn its attention to the issue of church government.

8. From woolly "Presbyterians" to clear-cut Presbyterians

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1. Claire Cross, Church and People 1450-1660: The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church (Fontana, 1976), 201.

2. For Pym's policy, see Kaplan, "Presbyterians and Independents", Review, LXXXIV.

3. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord, 78.

It should be pointed out that English "Presbyterians" prior to October 1643 were not doctrinaire Presbyterians.[1] Their "Presbyterianism" actually embraced every shade of opinion from Ussher's limited episcopacy to near Congregationalism. Hence they had no clear idea as to which kind of church government they wanted to replace episcopacy. With the passage of time, they gradually "inclined" to presbytery, although they did not intend to import a full-blooded Scottish Presbyterianism. No wonder that Baillie complained that English people conceived a presbytery to be "a strange monster".[2] It was not until 12 October, when the Assembly began its discussion of church government, that the leading divines, together with a mass of backbenchers, came to accept Presbyterianism of the Scottish version, due to the increasing sectarianism and anarchy consequent on the vacuum of power in the church,[3] and due to the pressure of the Scottish commissioners, who had tried from the outset to convince the majority anti-prelatic and vaguely "Presbyterian"

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1. Dr Anderson in his thesis argues that there was a process in which the English Presbyterians made the pilgrimage from a vague "presbyterian-minded" position via a more clear-cut "theoretical Presbyterian" position to a "classical Presbyterian" position. By "the presbyterian-minded" he means those who helped foster an emerging ideology of Presbyterian polity. The "theoretical Presbyterian" refers to those who endorsed an explicit form of Presbyterian government in their writings with the beginning of the Westminster Assembly in July 1643. The "classical Presbyterian" was used of those who actually participated in classes or provincial synods after 1646. See P.J. Anderson, "Presbyterianism and the Gathered Churches in Old and New England 1640-62: The Struggle for Church Government in Theory and Practice" (Unpublished D.phil. thesis, Oxford, 1979), 30.

2. Yule, "Some Problems", The Journal, XIII, 5-9; E.W. Kirby, "The English Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly", CH, XXXIII (1964), 418-22; JD, 28; W.M. Campbell, The Triumph of Presbyterianism (Edinburgh, 1958), 98f, 102; LJ, II, 117.

3. Kirby, "The English Presbyterians", CH, XXXIII, 426; Paul, The Assembly of the Lord, 114f. Cf. Campbell, op. cit., 98f.

divines that the order of the Kirk was iure divino and that the Churches of both nations should be brought into a fourfold uniformity in church doctrine, worship, catechism, and discipline.[1]

9. A survey of the Assembly debates on church officers (12 October - 31 December 1643)

On 12 October, Parliament, possibly through Scottish pressure, put an abrupt end to the discussion of the Thirty-Nine Articles, which were never revised, and urged the Assembly to discuss the pressing issue of church government, which, as demanded in the Solemn League, was to be in "nearer agreement with the church of Scotland and other reformed churches abroad".[2] Thus the Assembly began its heated debates on the delicate and explosive questions of church government.

On the 17th, the majority in the Assembly, anxious to keep debates as friendly as possible, proposed that the Assembly start with less controversial points of church discipline, such as church officers, namely, apostles, pastors, elders, deacons, and widows.[3]

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1. As early as 1641, Henderson, Baillie, and Gillespie had come to London for peace negotiations with the desire that the uniformity of religion in Britain be realised. Hence Baillie produced his The Unlawfulnesse and Danger of Limited Episcopacie (1641), and Gillespie his An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland (1641). Later, Rutherford published his A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Pavls Presbyterie in Scotland (1642). All these, based on the theories of Andrew Melville (1545-1622), had two major features: 1) a hierarchical structure, in which a higher assembly had authoritative power over lower assemblies; 2) "two kingdom theory", that is, the state had no power over the church. See LJ, I, 303; JD, 18n, 38f, 43; Campbell, op. cit., 98ff, 103.

2. JLJ, 17.

3. JD, 63; JLJ, 20.

The 20th of October saw the beginning of the first round of clashes between Presbyterians and Congregationals. While the former argued that authority in the church vested in the church officers, the latter contended that it rested rather with the congregation itself, or in the congregation together with its officers. Clearly this was a crucial issue between the two groups, as it determined whether a congregation could be self-governing without submission to superior officers. This fundamental difference became more apparent on the 30th, when the debate on apostleship raised another subject of dispute: whether the apostles received the keys (ecclesial censure) as officers or as ordinary believers. Bridge denied that the keys were given to Peter as an apostle, for Peter was not yet an apostle. Seaman contended that the apostles received the keys as apostles, rather than as believers. Temple and Gataker both argued that "the keys were not given to the church, but to the apostles." Goodwin replied that "the apostles never had all ecclesiastical power." Nevertheless, it was finally voted that the keys were given to the apostles as officers. The day following, Simpson argued, based on 2 Cor 2:10, Acts 15:22-3, and Mt 16:19, that the church exercised ecclesial power "together with the apostles". Seaman accused the dissenting brethren of Brownism. On 1 November, Bridge added to the vote of the day before that the keys were given to both officers and believers.[1]

The concern about the ubiquity of sectaries and the growth of gathered churches in London at that time indicated that the separatist issue would soon re-emerge. On 13 November, debates on church officers had to be temporarily abandoned to discuss whether or not the Church

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1. JD, 67-71; JLJ, 31-4.

of England was a true church, and the ministry thereof a true ministry. Now the dissenting brethren were forced to define their non-separatist position: the English Church was "true" by virtue of profession of faith and not with reference to its discipline.[1]

Significantly, the very next day, the Scots, in response to the mushrooming of sects, sent through Marshall a proposal for a government of pastors, teachers, ruling elders, and deacons within a structure of sessions, classes, synods, and national assemblies,[2] which gained the approval of Calamy, Young, Newcomen, Marshall (all Smectymnuans), Seaman, Walker, Herle, Whitaker, and other divines.[3]

On 15 November, debates on church officers recommenced, this time on whether the office of doctor or teacher was distinct from the office of pastor.[4] On the 20th, the Scottish commissioners were allowed for the first time to sit in the Jerusalem Chamber and take an active part in Assembly debates. Thus they formally began their influence and pressure on its members. However they were greeted by a clash of opinion between Presbyterians and Congregationals over the office of doctor or teacher. The latter was in favour of such a distinction, while the former not.[5] Eventually the Assembly came to such an accommodation that preaching and teaching were a part of the pastoral duty, and changed the subject.[6]

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1. JD, 71ff; JLJ, 48ff.
2. JD, 73; JLJ, 51.
3. Anderson, op. cit., 121.
4. JD, 73f.
5. LJ, II, 107f, 110f.
6. JD, 76f; JLJ, 57f.

On 22 November, the controversy over the office of ruling elder (1 Tim 5:17) erupted. For many English Presbyterians, it was unnecessary for the elder to be subdivided into teaching and ruling elders. But the Scots could scarcely imagine a church government without ruling elders who were asked to admonish offenders and assist pastors in government.[1] On the 30th, Henderson asserted that the office of ruling elder was iure divino.[2] A week later, the dissenting brethren, while recognising its value as an aid to an overworked ministry, disliked the Scottish practice of affording the ruling elder an authoritative role in ecclesial censure, which actually belonged to the congregation. At all events, no vote was taken on this matter. On 14 December, there arose another difference between Congregational and Scottish views on eldership: while the former believed the ruling elder to be an ecclesiastical person, the latter a layman.[3] The issue was accordingly put on a back burner until it re-emerged the following year.

So far tension between Congregationals and Presbyterians had not become so great as to deprive both groups of hope of unity. There had been accommodation, at least, at two points: the distinction between pastor and teacher/doctor; and the office of ruling elder.[4]

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1. JD, 78; JLJ, 60f.
2. JD, 80.
3. JLJ, 74f, 82f.
4. JD, 91.

The remaining debates in the Jerusalem Chamber between 14 and 28 December were largely on the office of deacon. The discussion was, however, followed by another debate of two days' duration on the "widow".[1]

D. Time for Apology

Before discussing the particular situation that provoked the dissenting brethren to publish their defence, we have, first of all, to ascertain the precise date of its publication, which will help us focus our attention on the exact situation.

1. The date of the publication of the apology

The date of the publication of the Apologeticall Narration is unclear, because it was simply dated "1643", which means that it could have been published anytime between 25 March 1643 and 24 March 1643/4. According to Edwards, the tract "came forth in the Moneth of December towards the later end of it".[2] The other evidence showed that it was registered with the Stationers' Company on 29 December 1643, and one of its copies was purchased on 3 January 1643/4 by George Thomason, the contemporary collector of almost all the tracts of the day.[3] Baillie summarised in his letter to Spang (18 February 1643/4) what had occurred since his previous letter of 1 January:

> To day.... At last, foreseeing they behooved, ere long, to come to the point, they put out in print, on a sudden, ane Apologeticall Narration of their way, which long had lyen readie

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1. JD, 86; JLJ, 83ff, 94, 96.

2. Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, II (1646), 50.

3. William Haller (ed.), Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647, II (Iowa, 1934), 305; I, 143.

> beside them.... This piece abruptlie they presented to the Assemblie, giving to every member a copy: also they gave books to some of either House. That same day [the day when copies of the tract were distributed] they [the dissenting brethren] invited us, and some principall men of the Assemblie, to a verie great feast... when we had not read their book, so no word of that matter was betwixt us; but so soon as we looked on it; we were mightilie displeased.

Immediately after the above occurrence, Baillie wrote: "The other day... Lord Essex came to the Assemblie, with the warrand of both Houses to sitt as a member; where... he was welcomed by a harangue from the Proloquutor." (This event was dated in Lightfoot's Journal 5 January 1644.) In addition, Baillie mentioned that "the Lords that day" petitioned the Assembly for a divine to assist their House "for a week". (This actually took place on 4 January according to Lightfoot. Obviously it was for convenience sake that Baillie put these two events, the coming of Essex and the Lords' petition, together.) "Some dayes thereafter [after the coming of Essex]," Baillie continued, "the Lower House petitioned for the same." (This was dated by Lightfoot 15 January.)[1] Based on the above information, Berndt Gustafsson reasons that the tract was probably printed in late December,[2] published on 3 January, and presented abruptly to some MPs, the Scots and Assembly divines at the feast on the 4th.[3] However, W.M. Hetherington, based equally on Baillie's statement, dates the tract in late January or early February 1643/4.[4] This is followed by R.S. Paul, who argues that

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1. LJ, II, 128ff; JLJ, 103f, 111. All italics are mine. The Earl of Essex (d.1646) was Lord General or commander-in-chief of the parliamentary forces. See DNB.

2. Edward's "came forth" (see supra, 31), according to Gustafsson, was probably an error of memory.

3. Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren, 10, 12.

4. W.M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (Edinburgh, 1878), 177.

1) the Assembly debates showed that in early January prospects for accommodation were still bright (there was no reason for issuing the tract and exacerbating the break); 2) there is no indication in Lightfoot's Journal that the tract appeared at that time; and 3) the internal evidence given by Lightfoot's account of the debates suggests that 26 January was probably the day when copies of the tract were delivered to the Assembly divines at the feast.[1]

By comparison, Gustafsson's argument is more justifiable, for he has showed that there was a process in which the tract was printed, published, and distributed; this can be proved by Baillie's suggestion that the apology had existed for a long time before it appeared in print,[2] and fits in with the registration of the tract in the books of the Stationer's Company, the information given by Edwards, Thomason's note on his copy, and Baillie's orderly account of the events, which, though undated by Baillie, were however dated in Lightfoot's Journal. It is relatively difficult to accept the argument of Paul, because 1) he has ignored the known data shown above; 2) the hope of accommodation he has mentioned actually also applies to late January;[3] 3) the reason why Lightfoot made no mention of the distribution of the tract is probably that he recorded only what was happening within the Assembly, excluding events outwith it, or that he, being a Presbyterian of Erastian version, was not so alarmed at the tract as Baillie and accordingly paid no attention to it; 4) the evidence of

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1. Paul, Assembly, 208f, 228f. What Paul calls "internal evidence" is this: "Whilst he [Charles Herle] was in his discourse, there was delivered to every one of us [*]." See JLJ, 123.

2. See supra, 31f: "At last... long had lyen readie beside them."

3. Infra, 301.

the tract being distributed on 26 January is too isolated, without any other relevant evidence supporting it, and what is more, the context shows that the delivery occurred within the walls of the Assembly, which does not fit in with Baillie's account, and what was delivered during the time when Herle was in his discourse could be something else, say, the books given by the Scots to the Assembly divines.[1] In view of these arguments, this study adopts Gustafsson's dating (3 January 1643/4). Having examined the timing of the publication, we shall raise this question: why did the dissenting brethren present a defence of their polity at precisely this juncture?

2. The situation that prompted the publication of the apology

In the early months of the Westminster Assembly, the dissenting brethren cherished the sanguine hope that the Assembly, by the light of God's Word, might bring into being the national establishment of their own way.[2] But this hope was increasingly threatened by the Scottish influence upon the Assembly. First, the Solemn League gave the Scots the opportunity of pursuing their Presbyterian ideal of religious uniformity within Britain. Significantly enough, on 5 October, the Scots produced a tract entitled The Reformation of the Discipline and Service of the Church... As it was approved by most Reverend Divines of the Church of Scotland (1643), in which they advocated the Scottish discipline. While the dissenting brethren realised the importance of the Scottish military aid, they were

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1. JLJ, 121f: Dr Stanton mentioned "that thanks might be given, in the name of the Assembly, to the Scots' commissioners for the books they had given to every one of us." Italics mine.

2. MWD, 100.

nevertheless alert and defensive after the Solemn League had been accepted. Hence Simpson told the Commons, three weeks after the taking of the Solemn League, that desirable as religious uniformity had been, it had never been actually achieved in any church in history. A forced uniformity did no good, as it "cut off" some consciences that could not exactly fit the uniform standard.[1] Next, Scottish voices were raised, on 14 November, to demand the settling of the English Church according to their hierarchical pattern, and on the 22nd, to defend the jus divinum of ruling elders.[2] A week later, Bridge preached before the Commons at St Margaret's, Westminster, that the people should play an important part in ecclesial affairs.[3] Thirdly, the Scots took every opportunity to advance their cause from December. Henderson, for example, preached to the MPs from the pulpit of St Margaret's that only if the Presbyterian government was established, would England expect God's blessing, for lukewarmness in religion would kindle the wrath of God.[4] No doubt all these contributed to the release of the apology. But what was the direct cause of it? To answer this question, we shall examine what happened in the Assembly from 20 November to 23 December 1643.

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1. Sidrach Simpson, A Sermon Preached at Westminster Before Sundry of the House of Commons (16 October 1643), 31f.

2. Supra, 29.

3. William Bridge, "Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons, at their Public Fast, November 29, 1643", WWB, IV, 339-42.

4. Alexander Henderson, A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at their late solemne Fast, December 27, 1643 (1644), 9f.

In November 1643, the dissenting brethren were still trying to keep the 1641 agreement, although some three Congregational churches had recently been formed in England,[1] and Nicholas Lockyer and John Goodwin were reported to be assaying to gather congregations in London (in early November).[2] On the 20th, London ministers, having found their parish churches losing their "fattest sheep", were forced to present a petition to the Assembly, complaining of the vacuum of authority in the church, "the increase of Anabaptists, Antinomians, and other sectaries; the boldnesse of some in the citie, and about it, in gathering separate congregations", and urging the speedy settlement of church government and the suppression of gathered churches.[3] In response to this, Goodwin, Nye, Bridge, Carter, Greenhill, and Burroughes, surprisingly joined Marshall and other moderate Presbyterians the following month in publishing a tract entitled Certaine Considerations to Dis-swade Men from Fvrther Gathering of Chvrches. The tract on the one hand discouraged the gathering of churches and on the other stressed that both Parliament and Assembly would preserve the rights of particular congregations and would presently establish a rule that all men could with clear consciences accept, which implied that the Congregationals could be accommodated within a national Presbyterian Church.[4] Here both Presbyterians and Congregationals had conceded more than they wished: the former hinted

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1. Infra, 269.

2. JLJ, 46; LJ, II, 111; TS, 94. For John Goodwin and Nicholas Lockyer, see infra, 269f.

3. LJ, II, 111; JLJ, 56f; Anta., 5; Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography (1645), 79. See also supra, 28f.

4. Certaine Considerations to Dis-swade Men from Fvrther Gathering of Chvrches (23 December 1643), 3.

that the rights of particular congregations would be safeguarded, while the latter condemned publicly any gathering of churches.

On 20 December, just a few days before the joint declaration, there had occurred another incident. As was recorded in Baillie's letter of 1 January 1643/4, "some of the Anabaptists came to the Assemblie's scribe with a letter enveighing against our Covenant, and... a printed sheet of admonitions to the Assemblie from an old English Anabaptist at Amsterdame," asking for "a full libertie of conscience to all sects". No sooner had the scribe read the whole paper to the Assembly than a debate happened. The dissenting brethren became alarmed at the Assembly divines' condemnation of sectarian activities. In this situation, they were forced to defend themselves from the aspersions it had created and to dissociate themselves from the sects.[1]

From the above, we can find the direct reason why the dissenting brethren were driven at this juncture to issue the Apologeticall Narration. It is obvious that they presented their apology as a counterbalance to the Certaine Considerations, in which they had offended the Independents outside the Assembly by dissuading them from further gathering of churches. This can be proved by Edwards who complained that the apology was

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1. JD, 90f; Gustafsson, op. cit., 12; LJ, II, 121; JLJ, 86. See also AN, 1: "OUR eares have been of late so filled with a sudden and unexpected noyse of confused exclamations, (though not so expresly directed against us in particular, yet in the interpretation of the most, refleting on us) that awakened thereby, we are enforced to anticipate a little that discovery of our selves which otherwise we resolved to have left to Time and Experience of our wayes and spirits, the truest Discoverers and surest Judges of all men and their actions. And now we [that have hitherto laine under so dark a cloud of manifold mis-apprehensions] shall begin to make some appearance into publique light...."

> hastned to follow upon these considerations first to counterballance that act of yours against further gathering of Churches, that your cause and way might receive no losse and prejudice, and to satisfie your own party (many of them greatly exclaiming against you for your hands to those considerations).[1]

It was probably also presented as a supplement to the Certaine Considerations, in which they had shown no sign of their dissociation from the separatists.[2] This is suggested in the apology passim.

Another incident is also worth mentioning. John Pym who had tried to maintain Presbyterian-Congregational unity suddenly died on 8 December. This, no doubt, created a certain psychological insecurity among both groups, despite the short-lived unity displayed shortly by Certaine Considerations. The sudden death of Pym must also have helped prompt the dissenting brethren to publish their defence.[3]

Considered in toto, it was owing to their growing dissatisfaction with the direction of the Assembly's discussions of church officers, to the realisation that there would be no hope of either adoption of their way or comprehension within the new national church, to the fears that the Solemn League would open the way for the scotticisation of the English Church and that Scottish presbytery would be as intolerant as the Laudian regime, to the compromising position in which Certaine Considerations had unconsciously placed them, to the nervousness about being identified as sectarians, and to their sense of insecurity issuing from the death of Pym, that the dissenting brethren, with imprimatur from the moderate Presbyterian, Charles

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1. Anta., 6.

2. Gustafsson, op. cit., 12; JD, 91.

3. Kaplan, "Presbyterians and Independents", Review, LXXXIV, 248.

Herle, through the printing presses for Robert Dawlman,[1] published what Baillie described as "a most slie and cunning" plea "for a tolleration",[2] in which they petitioned Parliament to tolerate those who were doctrinally orthodox but ecclesiologically dissented from the national Presbyterian Church that seemed inevitable by 1644, made public the tenets of their Congregational way, and defended them from the taint of Separatism, proving their nearness to the Reformed Churches.

E. The Content of the Apology

The Apologeticall Narration had not been intended as a systematic treatise on the Congregational way, but rather as a brief apologia, in which they set forth the general principles of their way.[3] This 31-page tract can be divided into three main parts. In the first part, the dissenting brethren recalled how they fled to Holland because of their nonconformity to the Laudian Church and how this caused them to search Scripture for the pattern of true government. Then they described how in Holland their churches and the other Reformed churches recognised each other as true churches. In the second part, the main part, they dealt, first of all, with how in worship and ministry they followed the same example of all the other Reformed

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1. AN, frontispiece and title page. Charles Herle was one of the 12 clergymen appointed by Parliament in June 1643 for licensing books of divinity. See DNB. Robert Dawlman was a bookseller who dealt in theological literature. See Haller (ed.), op. cit., II, 305.

2. LJ, II, 130.

3. AN, 30; LJ, II, 130. The first systematic Congregational defence in England did not appear until 1647 when William Bartlet wrote his 'IXNOYPAPHIA, Or A Model of the Primitive Congregational way (1647).

Churches. Then they made known their three principles that guided their practices: 1) "the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles"; 2) "not to make our present judgement and practice... for the future"; 3) "that in the matters of greatest moment and controversie, we stil chose to practice safely." It was in the third one that they introduced three controversies, about "the qualification" of church members, "the lawfulnesse" of set liturgy, and "the government and discipline in the Churches".[1] In the last part of the tract, they said that they had hoped that when they returned home they would be able to lead the church to a new reformation, but they found themselves to be suspected of being Brownists. In fact, they stressed, theirs was "a middle way" between Brownism and Presbyterianism. They also expressed how, for unity's sake, they had kept silence when they were accused of heresy and schism. After that, they argued that they differed very little from the Reformed Churches in doctrine and discipline (the discipline in its narrow sense). They concluded with a clear plea that Parliament allow them to pursue their Congregational principles within the national Presbyterian Church.

F. The Immediate Consequences of the Apology

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1. "Discipline" was used in different senses. In the broad sense, it was synonymous with "polity", "government", and "order". See Inst., IV, 11:1; Walter Travers, A full and plaine declaration of Ecclesiasticall Discipline (n.p., 1574), 6. In the narrow, it was defined as the "admonition and correction of faults". See Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt, eds. W.H. Frere & C.E. Douglas (1954), 9; infra, 145.

There is no denying that the Apologeticall Narration was the most influential tract of all those published in the early 1640s in England, for it provoked "the most important religious controversy that England had ever experienced".[1] The immediate consequences of the manifesto were twofold. First, it ended the agreement of silence reached at Calamy's house two years ago, and shattered the seeming unity of the Certaine Considerations impressively displayed in the Assembly ten days ago. The uncertain relations between Congregationals and Presbyterians were thus aggravated. Second, it set the stage on which some fundamental issues, previously postponed, would be openly discussed. The whole Assembly debates immediately became more confused and divisive, although efforts for accommodation persisted. Outside the Assembly, a vehement tract war began and gathered momentum.[2] At home, the tracts following it advocated either Presbyterianism or Congregationalism and attacked individuals of either persuasion, which appeared to "have turned the world... upside downe".[3] Abroad, there followed a succession of defences of the Congregational way by New England writers.[4] The net result of these was that puritanism was more and more dissolved into its constituent elements: Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. The appearance of the two distinct groups marked the advent of the denominational era in ecclesiastical history.[5]

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1. Jordan, op. cit., II, 52.

2. Infra, 299-303, 305-8.

3. John Goodwin, A Reply of two of the Brethren to A.S. (1644), 1.

4. Infra, 43f.

5. Infra, 257-62. The question whether the appearance of the two groups can be properly regarded as the beginnings of the denominational era is still debated among the scholars. Claire Cross maintains that even the history of the Interregnum is still

III. New England Connection

The Congregationals in England were not alone in their cause. They had their comrades-in-arms in Massachusetts Bay, New England, where Congregational churches had been fully established by the mid-1630s. As a matter of fact, Congregationals in both England and New England were heirs to the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritan tradition.[1] However, it was the New Englanders who before all else developed what had been undeveloped in puritan thought into mature Congregationalism. Naturally, the Bay Colony, as the title of Perry Miller's work suggests, became the stronghold of Congregational orthodoxy that Englishmen must consult with reverence.[2]

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to be seen as "the prehistory of the different denominations". See Cross, "The Church in England 1646-60", in G.E. Aylmer (ed.), The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-60 (1972), 118f. However, Watts, while recognising that "the boundaries between the different denominations were sometimes indistinct in the 1640s and 1650s," insisted that "this does not mean that one cannot give the overwhelming majority of gathered... churches their appropriate denominational label at any given period of their history." See MWD, 165. Collinson also asserts that "properly denominational history... begins in the 1640s." See GP, 528. Here a nod must be given to both Collinson and Watts, whose arguments can be verified by William Prynne's Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Church Government (1644), in which Prynne deplored the sad division between Presbyterians and Congregationals.

1. Paul, An Apologeticall Narration, 47. Cf. John Cotton, The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared (1648), 13, 27.

2. Infra, 67, 113. For the details of Congregational orthodoxy in New England, see Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650.

The leading divine in Massachusetts Bay was John Cotton.[1] Eight years after his arrival in the Colony in 1633, Cotton, together with his colleagues there, such as Richard Mather (1596-1669) and John Davenport,[2] taking advantage of the Revolution in England, made great efforts to export the "New England way" to his mother country. Hence his two treatises, The True Constitvtion of a particular visible Church (1642),[3] and The Way of the Churches of Christ in New England (1645 [written in 1642]).[4] These were followed by Mather's Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discvssed, in an Answer of the Elders of the severall Churches in New England to two and thirty Questions, sent over to them by divers Ministers in England, declare their judgments therein (15 June 1643 [written in 1639]), to which was appended Davenport's An Answer of the Elders of the Severall chvrches in New-England unto Nine Positions, sent over to them (By divers Reverend and godly Ministers in England) to declare their Judgement therein (written in 1639). When Parliament in England called the Westminster Assembly, when the English accepted the Solemn League, and when the breach between Congregationals and Presbyterians, marked by the publication of the Apologeticall Narration, commenced, all in

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1. John Cotton (1584-1652) was made Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1603 and was ordained at Boston, Lincolnshire in 1612. After being called by Laud's court, he resigned his vicarage and migrated to America in 1633. There, he was chosen teacher of the Boston church. From here he began to establish his Congregational version of nonconformity throughout the Bay Colony. In 1637, he participated in the Antinomian controversy and later conducted the debates against Roger Williams. See BDBR. See also supra, 6f.

2. For Richard Mather, see BDBR. For John Davenport, see supra, 12n.

3. The another name of the tract is The Doctrine of the Church, to which is committed the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven (1642).

4. Infra, 68n.

1643, the New England divines who had observed the changing events in England with fervent curiosity realised that they must play a significant part in the disciplinary controversy in the Isles lying "many thousand miles"[1] offshore. To show their solidarity with the dissenting brethren in Westminster, they successively produced authoritative works on Congregational discipline as a source of encouragement, such as Cotton's The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven (1644), Thomas Welde's, An Answer to W.R. his narration of the opinions and practices of the Churches lately erected in New-England (1644), Thomas Hooker's A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline (1648), and Cotton's The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared (1648). All these works, which represented a large consensus on the New England way, provided further doctrinal support for the Apologeticall Narration, and hence contributed significantly to the Congregational cause in England vis-à-vis the Presbyterians.

Literature from the other side of the Atlantic always aroused ardent interest among Congregationals in England, for whom the New England way was a blueprint for the Christian Church, just as the Scottish pattern similarly served the Presbyterians. To put it vividly, Boston was their Congregational "Geneva", and Cotton their Congregational "Calvin". On account of this, this study must relate Congregationalism in England not only to puritanism in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, but also to Congregationalism in New England.

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1. AN, 5.

IV. Terminology

It is necessary to give our definitions to the terminology used in this study, such as "puritan", "anglican", "congregational", "presbyterian", "Separatist" or "Brownist", "sectary", "Independent", "Congregational", and "Presbyterian".

The term "puritan" was conventionally used in contradistinction to the term "anglican". According to J.F.H. New, the theological differences between puritans and anglicans were deeply ingrained even from the outset.[1] None the less, to characterise Elizabethan and Jacobean Protestantism in terms of a dichotomy between "puritan" and "anglican" has become less and less satisfactory. Professor Collinson has convinced us that puritanism that penetrated into the very centre of the Establishment before 1625 was not opposed to anglicanism or conformism. He concludes that puritan should belong in "the more inclusive category of anglican or Protestant".[2] The work of Nicholas Tyacke has forced us to recognise that there was a "Calvinist consensus" in pre-Laudian England.[3] For Paul Christianson, some moderate anglicans, such as Archbishops Edmund Grindal (d.1583), James Ussher, Matthew Hutton (d.1606) of York, and Bishop John Jewel (d.1571) of Salisbury had much in common with men who could broadly be

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1. J.F.H. New, Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition 1558-1640 (1964), passim.

2. GP, 445-98, 527-62; Collinson, "A Comment", JEH, XXXI, 485ff. See also Patrick Collinson's The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (1967) and his The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625 (Oxford, 1982).

3. Nicholas Tyacke, "Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution", in Conrad Russell (ed.), The Origins of the English Civil War (1973), 119-29.

seen as puritans.[1] More recently, Peter Lake has argued that moderate puritans, such as William Whitaker, Laurence Chaderton, and William Perkins, were the establishment puritans or "anglicans" to some extent.[2] In effect, anglicans and puritans, as he sees it, both showed their loyalty to the Church of England by joining the chorus against the Church of Rome.[3]

Another question is whether the term "puritan" should be applied to both "Presbyterian" and "Congregational" as seen in the England of the 1640s and 1650s. Instead of inflating its definition, Basil Hall deflates it. He argues that the use of the term "puritan" had become obsolete by 1640; hence it should be restricted to the years between 1564 and 1640.[4] In light of this, this study strictly distinguishes "puritan" before 1640 from "Presbyterian" and "Congregational" or "Independent" after 1640. However it acknowledges that puritans were the progenitors of both Congregationals and Presbyterians.[5]

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1. Paul Christianson, "Reformers and the Church of England under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts", JEH, XXXI (1980), 468f.

2. William Whitaker (1548-95) was Master of St John's College, Cambridge. He was a strict Calvinist. Laurence Chaderton (1536-1640) was Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was also one of the translators of the Authorised Version. William Perkins (1558-1602) was Fellow of Christ's College as well as lecturer at Great St Andrew's, Cambridge. As a Calvinist theologian, his influence in the 17th century was little inferior to Calvin and Richard Hooker. For these moderate puritans, see DNB.

3. Peter Lake, Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker (1988), 1-6; idem, Moderate puritans and the Elizabethan church (1982), 1-15, 279-92.

4. Basil Hall, "Puritanism: the Problem of Definition", Studies in Church History, II (1965).

5. According to Jeremiah Burroughes, it was only after 1640 that "the name Puritan... seeing it self ready to dye, divided it self into two, Roundhead [the scornful name for Presbyterian] and Independent [the scornful name for Congregational]." See Burroughes, Irenicum, 177.

Having examined the modern scholarship, we should define the terms "puritan" and "anglican" accordingly. The term "puritan" is used to label the self-professed "godly" within the supposedly corrupt Elizabethan and early Stuart Church, who ranged from those who could be said to have conformed, though somewhat uneasily, to the government and ceremonies of the Church to those who were less conformable and even attempted to presbyterianise or congregationalise that Church from within. The term "anglican" is used to include the less ardent Protestants, who conformed, or relatively conformed, to the status quo of the Church of England and repudiated the Church of Rome as a corrupt church. It must be remembered, first and last, that puritans and anglicans were not two specific, rigidly defined groups, for they were both more or less Calvinist in theology.[1] It is for this reason that "puritan" is used with a lower case p, and "anglican" a lower case a.[2]

The term "congregational" with a small c is used to denote some of the Jacobean puritans who, while allowing external control in unusual situations, believed that ecclesiastical jurisdiction lay primarily in the particular congregation of believers.[3] The word is

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1. According to Ann Hughes, anglicans were "credal Calvinists" who believed in the doctrine of predestination as a mere theory, while puritans were "experimental Calvinists" who saw this theory as the basis for their religious practice. See Hughes, op. cit., 103f.

2. Another reason why I use "anglican" with a small a is that the term "Anglican" with a capital A was not coined until 14 May 1644, when Charles I proclaimed that he would defend "this most holy religion of the Anglican Church". Quoted in Morrill, The Nature of the English Revolution, 148n.

3. Other epithets that are equivalent to "congregational" are Miller's "Non-Separating Congregationalist", Nuttall's "Semiseparatist", and Watts' "Jacobite". See supra, 2; VS, 9f; MWD, 94f. I prefer "[non-separating] congregational[ist]" with a small c to the other three. For "Non-Separating

used in opposition to "presbyterian" with a lower case p that refers to some of the Elizabethan puritans, who, without overlooking the disciplinary sufficiency of a particular congregation, focussed their attention more on the governing of a presbytery over its constituent congregations. The Elizabethan and Jacobean puritan views of church polity are thus seen to have partaken both of congregationalism and presbyterianism.

The interchangeable terms "Brownist" and "Separatist" are used to designate a handful of extreme Protestants who, impatient of puritan attempts to reform the Church of England from within, separated from and formed secret "conventicles" in rivalry with the parish churches and were later forced to leave England and established their exile churches in Holland in Elizabethan and early Stuart times. Related to these terms is the term "sectary", which is loosely applied to those members of religious sects or "low Separatists", who were composed mainly of the illiterate and fanatical, and who would even oppose the reformed Church of England during the Civil Wars.

The term "Independent" is both inclusive and exclusive. In the inclusive sense, it is used of both more conservative Congregationals ("classical", "orthodox" or "high Independents") and more radical Baptists and sectaries of all kinds, such as Antinomians, Familists, Seekers and so on ("radical Independents").[1] In the exclusive, it is simply applied to Congregationals. (In this study, "Independent" and

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Congregational[ist]" with a big C is too anachronistic; "Semiseparatist", though used by the contemporaries, was repudiated by Henry Jacob himself; "Jacobite", though also used by the contemporaries, is easily confused with the "Jacobite" of the following century, a term for the followers of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

1. MWD, 94ff, 100; Yule, op. cit., 11-9; Cotton, op. cit., 11, 103.

"Congregational" may be used interchangeably.)[1] The term "Congregational" is used to mean those either in England (1640-62) or in New England (1633-62) who regarded themselves as members of the Church of England, but held all legislative, disciplinary, and judicial powers to be vested only in a "gathered" congregation of visible saints, though still performing the duties of fellowship by means of associations.[2] In contradistinction to this is the term "Presbyterian", which in its narrow sense refers to those Protestants in England (1643-62) who attempted to establish an exclusive and intolerant national church, with a hierarchy of national assemblies, provincial synods, presbyteries, and local sessions, and paid by tithes, as was done in Scotland; and in its broad sense also includes the members of the Church of Scotland (1640-62).[3]

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1. The term "Independent", together with its derived term "Independency", was originally coined by Burton in 1641. See Henry Burton, The Protestation Protested (n.p., 1641); Richard Baxter, The True History of Councils Enlarged and Defended (1682), 90.

2. The term "Congregational" was originally coined by Mather, who wrote thus in 1639: "all visible Churches are Congregationall." See CGCC, 10. See also Cotton, op. cit., 11. Actually the term "Congregational" was preferred in New England, while "Independent" was largely used in England. See MWD, 94; DP, 345. The reason why I prefer "Congregational" to "Independent" here is that the latter was sometimes too comprehensive and that it was disowned by the dissenting brethren themselves. See infra, 122.

3. Like "Independent", the term "Presbyterian" appeared for the first time in 1641. See The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v., "Presbyterian". Cf. Baxter, op. cit., 90.

CHAPTER ONE

THE "MIXTURE OF GOOD AND BAD" OR "THE BETTER PART"?

While the scholastic Protestants on the Continent were primarily preoccupied with systematic theology (intellectualism), some of the Protestants in England laid more emphasis on "practical divinity" (voluntarism). The former tended to be more speculative; the latter, more "experimental". Comparing the Dutch "form of godliness" with English "power of godliness" (2 Tim 3:5), the dissenting brethren who had taken refuge in Holland wrote in the Apologeticall Narration:

> [Although] in Doctrine they had a most happy hand... yet the Practicall part, the power of godlinesse and the profession thereof, with difference from carnall and formall Christians, had not been advanced and held forth among them, as in this our owne Island.[1]

Here, while appreciating the brilliant high theology demonstrated by the Dutch, possibly at the Synod of Dort, the dissenting brethren were, however, disappointed by their daily practice that did not measure up to their own standards. It goes without saying that they would have agreed with Paul Baynes in suggesting that the Dutch had a "Strong Head", but a "Cold Heart" in religion, and with Thomas Hooker in lamenting that the Dutch "content themselves with very Form [of Godliness]... but the Power of Godliness, for ought I can see or hear, they know not."[2] The religious laodiceaness of the "carnall and formall Christians" in Holland, as witnessed by Willem Teellinck, a

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1. AN, 4.

2. Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, III (1702), 9, 62; DP, 357f. Thomas Hooker (d.1647) was suspended from his benefice in 1629. He withdrew to Holland in 1631 and then to New England in 1633. See BDBR.

Dutch pietist, found expression largely in the sins of licentious holidays, plays, cursing, and Sabbath breaking. When Teellinck visited England in 1618, he noticed that "the Practical part" of divinity, though not well developed in Holland, had been well developed in England: faith working through love (formed faith), daily devotions, faithful attendance at sermons, caring for the poor and the sick, comforting the depressed, and a loving family life.[1]

Relevant to their emphasis on practical divinity was the dissenting brethren's concern with the issue of church membership, in which they dissented from the Reformed Churches. In the Apologeticall Narration, they stated:

> one great controversie of these times is about the qualification of the Members of the Churches, and the promiscuous receiving and mixture of good and bad; Therein we chose the better part, and to be sure, received in none but such as all the Churches in the world would by the balance of the Sanctuary acknowledge faithful....[2]

Here we see that one of the cardo controversiae between Congregationals and Reformed Churches was about the quality of church membership, and that the Congregationals preferred to choose "the better part" rather than receive the "mixture of good and bad".

To analyse the Congregational idea of church membership fully, this chapter will, first of all, discuss the distinction between "national church" and "gathered church". Secondly, the "communion of saints" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England will be examined. Thirdly, the "test" for church membership in New England will be assessed. Then

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1. DP, 360.

2. AN, 11.

comes the heart of the matter: the Congregational vision of the church of "the better part". Finally, the question of "perfectionism" will be raised.

I. "National Church" and "Gathered Church"

Although we cannot find the terms "national church" and "gathered church" in the Apologeticall Narration, yet we can find some of their connotations in the phrases: "mixture of good and bad" and "the better part". Therefore the discussion on the issue of church membership must be preceded by the clarification of the terms: "national church" and "gathered church".

A "gathered church", to quote Henry Burton, is "a [visible] particular Church" composed of the "visible Saints", who "are willing and desirous, and doe freely enter into Covenant to observe all the condidition [sic] and orders thereof according to Gods Word".[1] To put it more concretely, it is a disciplined church, which was planted or formed through a covenant (the covenant with God and with one another)

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1. Burton, The Protestation Protested, sigs. C2v, B3r. It is not altogether impossible that the English concept of the "gathered church" came indirectly from the Anabaptist insights into the church. For we know that the Marian exiles in the Rhineland were very much influenced ecclesiologically by the disciples of Martin Bucer, who was himself to some extent influenced ecclesiologically by the Anabaptists. See P.D.L. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers (1981), 6; Morgan, op. cit., 5; K.R. Davis, "No Discipline, No church: An Anabaptist Contribution to the Reformed Tradition", The Sixteenth Century Journal, XIII (1982), 55ff. Cf. infra, 58, 90. However, B.R. White attributes the concept in question to "the influence of Bucer mediated through John Calvin" rather than to that of the Anabaptists mediated through Bucer. See B.R. White, The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers (Oxford, 1971), 162.

by a group of voluntary and earnest Christians, who were "gathered" out of many parishes, paying no respect to parochial boundaries, and whose pastor was in no sense (at least at first) a parish minister, but was chosen by the members themselves. Opposed to a gathered church is a "national church". The "national church" is a less disciplined church with its parochial structure, which was by law established and in which all people in a given territory, whether willing or unwilling, were made church members by virtue of citizenship and infant baptism. It was what Burton called "a mixed multitude", or what he vividly described as "a confused lump", of which nine-tenths was "leaven" and one-tenths "pure flowre".[1]

The dissenting brethren's preference for "the better part" over the "mixture of good and bad" actually conveyed their preference for the gathered church over the national church. It was this preference that differentiated them from their Presbyterian brethren who maintained that the church must relate to the whole society. Evidently the Presbyterians were in favour of the old medieval "extrinsical" idea of Corpus Christianum; whereas the Congregationals, the "intrinsical" idea of Corpus Christi, that is, a voluntary community of the faithful (coetus fidelium) or the "communion of saints".[2]

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1. Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches commonly called Independents (1644), 31.

2. For the idea of Corpus Christi, see ibid., 50: "none are of this Communion, but visible Saints. Ergo, a true visible Church of Christ cannot be... confined to a parochiall multitude. ... the Government of this Communion, is not extrinsecall, but intrinsecall."

II. The "Communion of Saints" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England

The Congregational thesis that the church must be confined to "the better part" had actually been envisaged by the puritans. In order to see how the puritans influenced the Congregational view of church membership, we should look at the theoretical and practical aspects of the "communion of saints" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. For the "puritan vision of a church rightly reformed was a reflection not only of abstract ecclesiology but also of much human and social experience, mediated in 'the meeting of the godly'."[1] Hence our separate treatment of the "communion of saints" in theory and the "communion of saints" in practice in our following discussion.

A. The "Communion of Saints" in Theory

The ambition of the Elizabethan puritans, as Professor Collinson points out, "was to convert... the whole nation into... the semblance of a godly people, an elect nation on the model of biblical Israel", as had been envisaged by Tyndale. However, their sense of being isolated from the indifferent and hostile masses forced them, to quote Collinson, "to consider themselves a religious remnant", and hence "divide the nation by calling into existence a converted, religiously serious subculture which contrasted starkly with the lax and nominal Christianity of the majority".[2] In this light, they are seen to have ambiguously envisaged both a "reformed" national church and a

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1. GP, 504.

2. Patrick Collinson, "The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion", in Christopher Haigh (ed.), The Reign of Elizabeth I (1984), 173f.

disciplined gathered church.[1] It was not until the Jacobean times that puritans, seeing the failure of the Elizabethans to reform the national church as a whole, became less ambiguous and attached more importance to gathering the godly within the parish churches in England.[2]

Why did Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans attach importance to the "gathered" nature of the church, the "communion of saints"? The answer to this question must be sought in the following discussion of the impact of the puritan doctrine of election.

To begin with, we shall look at how the Reformed doctrine of election developed in general from Calvin to English Calvinism. According to R.T. Kendall, Calvin asserted that Christ has died for all without exception (universal atonement) and that faith includes the assurance of salvation. However, Theodore Beza (d.1605) departed from his predecessor by maintaining that Christ has died only for the elect (limited atonement) and that assurance should be severed from faith. Beza's "revisionist" position was afterwards adopted by the puritans -- the English Calvinists. As a result, the puritans got into

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1. A typical example is Thomas Cartwright (see infra, 101n), who on the one hand leaned towards a "reformed" national church, but on the other shared the concern of the Separatists for a disciplined gathered church, and maintained that the church was not an "inn" for all comers, but a "household" for the pure, and that it was not for "swine", but for "sheep". See A.F.S. Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603 (Cambridge, 1925), 309f; The Works of John Whitgift, ed. John Ayre, I (Cambridge, 1853), 383; III, 139; Avis, op. cit., 47.

2. The process of gathering the godly within the parish churches was, however, halted by the Laudians in the late 1620s and 1630s, who imposed conformity on the puritans. As a result, all meetings of the godly that had been tolerated by James I within the Church were now denounced as subversive "conventicles" and banned, which forced a great number of puritans to leave England and live overseas in exile. See Cross, Church and People, 195.

trouble over the assurance of salvation. A man who has faith in Christ may be unsure whether Christ has died for, and saved him. Although by faith he fails to know whether he is elect or not, yet through conscience and good deeds he can discover this. Beza's shift from Calvin, Dr Kendall suggests, did obscure the dividing line between Calvinism and Arminianism, which was, to some extent, characteristic of English puritanism.[1]

Now we can proceed to discuss the impact of the puritan doctrine of election. It must be noted, first of all, that puritans almost to a man laid emphasis on "practical divinity", which is the mirror of election. Practical divinity is concerned with, as William Perkins put it, "the communion of the [church] members with their head [Christ]", which "is not outward, but altogether spirituall in the conscience [or casuistry]".[2] It is also what William Ames called the theology of "will" or the theology of "living to God", by which he meant that men "live, according to the will of God, to the glory of God", and "God inwardly working in them". Thus a true Christian is one who not only gives an intellectual assent to the true faith ("historical faith"), but also truly practises it and truly experiences the reality behind

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1. R.T. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 (Oxford, 1979), 13-38, 51-164. It should be noted that Dr Kendall's thesis has been challenged by various critics, including Paul Helm, who argues that there was no substantial difference between Calvin and the puritans. In Helm's view, Calvin and the puritans both asserted limited atonement; both held that faith does not necessarily, but ought to, include assurance; both believed that a man who has faith in Christ may doubt that he is one of the elect; both taught that a man through his communion with Christ can know that he has been chosen; both stressed that a man is justified by faith alone that is accompanied by good works and assurance; and both believed that faith is effected by a God-given or renewed will. See Paul Helm, Calvin and the Calvinists (Edinburgh, 1981).

2. The Workes of W. Perkins, I (Cambridge, 1608-9), 315.

it, namely, conversion or "the reall change of state... in himselfe, 2 Cor. 5.17" ("saving faith"). In other words, in a true Christian are organically combined together both believer and saint, both historical faith and saving faith, and both orthodox theology and practical divinity.[1]

For the puritans, a man, though he is a member of the church before man, may be a reprobate before God. Hence there arose an existential question, "how a man may know whether he be the childe of God, or no." It is this ultimate concern with the question of predestination that afflicted many sincere but doubt-ridden puritan souls. In order to ensure their spiritual security, the puritans laid much stress on what Dr Kendall terms "experimental predestinarianism", which is said to have skirted the boundaries of Arminianism. By "experimental predestinarianism" is meant that a Christian should wage a life-long struggle to prove his "chosen" status and his calling. For Perkins, one's saving faith is incarnate in his sanctification, which finds expression in "mortification" ("the power of sinne" being "abated and crucified") and "viuification" ("inherent holines being begunne"). For Paul Baynes, who succeeded Perkins as preacher at St

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1. William Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity (1642), I, 1:1,6; 3:1-5,19; 29:1. Cf. VS, 106; DP, 359. For the discussion of "historical faith" and "saving faith", see Morgan, Visible Saints, 42f; G.F. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford, 1946), 135, in which "historical faith" is said "to believe in the gospel [generally] as a true story of what happened long ago", while "saving faith" is said to be affected by that gospel now, or apply it particularly to the believer himself now. In order to compare historical faith with saving faith, Dr. Nuttall writes: "it was insufficient to contemplate and adore God as the Creator, eternal but distant in the heavens [historical faith]. God must be found in direct personal experience, present now by His Spirit in the heart, making men able to say with Job, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee' [saving faith]." See ibid. All italics are mine.

Andrews', one's saving faith is demonstrated in one's power of godliness, for "[the power of] godlinesse cannot be without true faith [saving faith]."[1] In effect, both Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans tried to echo what 2 Peter 1:10 says: "give dilligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."[2]

Relevant to the puritan idea of "experimental predestinarianism" is the puritan idea of the "gathered" church or the "communion of saints". According to Calvin, the visible church is always the mixed assembly of wheat and tares; only the invisible church is comprised of saints alone. Much as he thought of discipline, Calvin insisted that Christ is the _esse_ of the church, while discipline is merely the _bene esse_ of it.[3] However, the second-generation Calvinist ecclesiology added to the two classical _notae_ of early Protestantism, the Word preached purely and sacraments used properly, a third one, discipline. As a result of this, puritanism, marked by its all-pervasive stress on

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1. _The Workes of W. Perkins_, I, 79, 421, 84; Paul Baynes, _Briefe Directions vnto a godly Life_ (1618), 47; Kendall, _op. cit._, 59, 8, 113, 72, 99.

2. _The Workes of W. Perkins_, I, 633; Kendall, _op. cit._, 66; Henry Jacob, _A Confession and Protestation of the Faith_ (n.p. 1616), sigs. D3r-v; _CS_, 60.

3. _Inst._, IV, 1:7,13; 12:1. Calvin's christocentric view of the church could be epitomised as: _ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia_, which contrasted sharply with Anabaptist view: _ubi sanctus, ibi ecclesia_, and Romanist view: _ubi episcopus, ibi ecclesia_.

church purity, came into being in England.[1] Shifting from Calvin, John Field and Thomas Wilcox, two Elizabethan puritans, defined the visible church as

> a company... of faythfull called and gathered out of the worlde by the preachinge of the Gospell, who followinge... true religione, do in one unitie of Spirite strengthen and comforte one another, dayelie, growinge and increasinge in true faythe, framinge their lyves, governmente, orders and ceremonies accordinge to the worde of God.[2]

Likewise, William Ames asserted that the visible church should be "a society of believers, and of Saints [Eph 1:1; 1 Cor 1:2]".[3] By "saints" Robert Parker meant those who can show "good signes of regeneration".[4] In effect, both Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans, as Dr Brachlow argues, tried to narrow as closely as possible the Calvinian gap between visible and invisible churches.[5]

Now the answer to the question why Elizabethan and early Stuart puritans attached importance to the "gathered" nature of the church and the "communion of saints" has been made plain. Just as a man's

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1. CS, 116f; Morgan, Visible Saints, 5. Cf. infra, 233f. Actually puritanism was the amalgam of Calvinism and radicalism. That is why the puritans, the Elizabethan puritans in particular, were paradoxically in favour of both national church and gathered church. The ambiguity of their position did sow the seeds of the future polarisation between Presbyterians and Congregationals: one received both "good and bad"; the other admitted only "the better part" for church membership.

2. The Seconde Parte of a Register, ed. Albert Peel, I (Cambridge, 1915), 86. John Field (d.1588) and Thomas Wilcox (d.1608) were both imprisoned for presenting An Admonition to Parliament in 1572. See DNB.

3. Ames, Marrow, I, 32:8. For Ames, "believers" and "saints" belonged together. As he wrote here: "the profession of true faith cannot be disjoyned from the profession of holinesse."

4. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. th. e. 158 (English translation of Rober Parker's De Politeia ecclesiastica [Amsterdam, 1616]), fol. 128.

5. CS, 119, 124.

sanctification marks his chosen status, so the "gathered" nature of a church secures its being a true visible church, in which the assurance of salvation can best be found.[1]

B. The "Communion of Saints" in Practice

Having examined the theoretical aspect of the "communion of saints", we shall now look at some practical aspect of it. This requires us to investigate the religious life of the "godly" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

Before doing so, we must make some general observations on what the Church of England was like in those days. According to one puritan observer, there were in one parish church a great multitude of so-called Christians who were "altogether blinde and ignorant of true religion" and ipso facto unworthy of the name "Christian". He exclaimed thus:

> what a pitifull thing is it, to come into a congregation of one or two thousand soules, and not to finde aboue foure or fiue that are able to giue an account of their faith in any tollerable manner, whereby it may be said probably: This is a Christian man, or, hee is a childe of the Church.[2]

On the information given by Professor Collinson, we know that, although most people in England went to church on Sunday morning because of the requirements of the law and custom, many of them spent the rest of the day in alehouses, taverns, inns, tobacco-shops, theatres, markets, fairs, dancing under a maypole, hawking, hunting, shooting, playing football, games, and card-playing. The "truly

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1. Cf. infra, 239f.

2. A parte of a register (Edinburgh, 1593), 305.

religious were few". And "churches were often empty while places of entertainment, such as pubs, betting-shops and theatres" were "full to bursting".[1]

In contrast with those who were only nominally Christians, the puritans, to quote C.S. Lewis, refused "to allow the [ancient] Roman distinction between the life of 'religion' and the life of the world" and endeavoured "to live the fully Christian life".[2] The puritans, especially those late Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans who were deeply influenced by Perkins' covenant theology,[3] made much of Sabbatarianism, preaching, fast, covenant, conversion, and sanctification. On Sabbath day, according to Professor Collinson, the godly attended not only a morning sermon but afternoon "exercises" and, possibly, a "night conventicle" (in the eyes of church authority and hostile neighbours) as well. At the morning service in a church, the godly made notes while listening to the sermon. At home in the afternoon, there were religious exercises, such as sermon-repeating, prayer, catechising, and Psalm-singing.[4] In the evening, there could be a "night conventicle". For instance, as one manuscript shows, at Aythrop Roding, Essex, there met in the house of one of the parishioners around "tenne persons" for supper. Over the meal, they discussed the doctrine they had just learned. After meal, some of them, it was reported, "attended to one that read in the Book of

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1. Collinson, "The Elizabethan Church", in Haigh (ed.), op. cit., 172f; Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 203-7, 222-5.

2. C.S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding drama (Oxford, 1954), 42.

3. For Perkins' covenant theology, see infra, 234.

4. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 243; GP, 10, 536f.

Martyrs"; the rest to a suspended vicar, who "was reading by the fireside a peece of a catechisme". Finally they all sang a Psalm and prayed, "and so departed about ten o'clock at night".[1] In a society where recreation on Sunday was conventional and acceptable, the puritan conduct on the same day was undoubtedly odd and offensive.

The godly even attended sermons and lectures in neighbouring churches on days other than the Sabbath. In parts of East Anglia, the godly parishioners went to lectures in other parishes on working days, or to the lectures by "combination" on market days.[2] At Ketton, Suffolk, for example, some people were reported to have travelled up to twenty miles to hear weekly lectures given by a preacher. They arrived early in the morning to make sure of seats, so that they could see the preacher at the church-yard.[3] At Calk, Derbyshire, the godly went with their victuals to spend the whole day with a preacher and came back in the evening "in companies... singing Psalms in their return home".[4] In effect, every godly company with a lecturer or preacher among them, according to Professor Haller, "tended to become a 'gathered church'".[5]

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1. "Sir Julius Caesar to Sir Francis Walsingham, 18 May 1584", in British Museum, MS. Lansdowne 157, fol. 186; quoted in GP, 11.

2. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 246, 258f. By "combination" Professor Collinson means "a panel of ministers, as few as three or as many as twenty or more... most of whom would be incumbents... within the same deanery". Lectures by "combination" was one of the salient characteristics of church life in Jacobean England. See GP, 468f.

3. Samuel Clarke, The Lives of sundry Eminent Persons, I (1683), 187; Collinson, The Religion of Protestants,259.

4. Samuel Clarke, The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines (1677), 191; quoted in Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 260.

5. William Haller, Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Reformation (N.Y., 1967), 115.

In addition, there were extraordinary occasions for gathering: days of humiliation, fasting, and thanksgiving. In somewhere in Warwickshire in 1596, a fast was attended by hundreds of neighbouring parishioners, who heard three sermons given by three more "edifying" preachers. They ended the day with a shared meal.[1]

There were also instances of puritans forming a godly company on the basis of a covenant. Richard Rogers (d.1618), an Elizabethan preacher, and some twenty souls are said to have entered into a covenant, in which they promised to walk more closely with God, to spend some time each day in prayer, to aim for close fellowship with one another, and to avoid close contact with the ungodly.[2] Similarly, at Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1615, the godly identified themselves with the elect, withdrew themselves from the "profane", and gathered themselves into a tighter inner group within the parish church "by entering into covenant with God, and with one another, to follow after the Lord, in the purity of his worship".[3] "These covenanted groups," as Professor Collinson remarks, "may seem to resemble gathered and separated churches in embryo."[4]

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1. Lichfield Joint Record Office, B/C/3/3, 21; cited in Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 261.

2. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 270.

3. Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, I, 324, 238f; Larzer Ziff, The Career of John Cotton: Puritanism and the American Experience (Princeton, 1962), 43, 49.

4. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 271.

The puritans, the Jacobean puritans in particular, laid stress not only on the "social experience" of the saints ("fellowshippe of the members with themselues") but also on the experience of their personal encounters with God ("fellowshippe of the members with the head").[1]

Now we should look at several cases of the puritan "conversion" (what is now often called the "born again" experience) at Cambridge. Paul Baynes, to start with, was reported to have been converted while he was at Christ's College, where

> it pleased God... to shew him his sinnes, and to work effectual Repentance in him for the evil of his waies; so that forsaking his former evil company and practices, he became eminent for Piety and Holiness.... After which gracious change wrought in him by the goodness of God.[2]

John Cotton, after listening to the sermons of Richard Sibbes in 1609, was shown the sight of his natural enmity against God. Later he saw the vanity of his former "religion" and thus lay for a long while in despair. His heaviest burden was not removed until he looked to Christ for His healing.[3] Thomas Goodwin, in his personal "Memoirs", recalled that he had been given a "Sight" of his inward sinfulness. After his evangelical despair, his will was "melted and soften'd"; the "Stone [heart] made Flesh, disposed to receive, and... turn to God"; his spirit was "clothed with a new Nature, naturally inclining me to good" instead of "evil". Henceforth he made "the Glory of God" his "only

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1. Supra, 54; The Workes of W. Perkins, I, 315.

2. Clarke, The Lives of Thirty-Two English Divines, 22.

3. Ibid., 217f. Richard Sibbes (1577-1636) was Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge. He was appointed lecturer at Holy Trinity church, Cambridge, in 1615. See BDBR.

end". As he said: "I am swallowed up in God."[1] From these cases we see the puritan ordo salutis: 1) the hearing of the Word that conveys the unmerited grace; 2) the terrors of the law: being shown his sins and their punishment; 3) afflictions: despairing of his salvation; 4) humiliation: knowing that his own righteousness cannot save him; 5) sorrow for his sins; 6) looking to the Cross, the only hope; 7) pardon; 8) peace; and 9) the infusion of saving grace.

Thinking that "the first grace" (regeneration) alone was insufficient, the puritans, especially the Jacobean puritans, strove very much for "the second grace" (sanctification). For the first one should be ratified by the second one that assures (from grace to grace).[2] Hence a saint, after his conversion, must continue to grow in grace. As John Winthrop (d.1649), the first governor of Massachusetts Bay, recalled his post-conversion experience happened in 1606:

> Now I came to some peace and comfort in God and in his ways, my chief delight was therein.... Now I grew full of zeal... and very liberal in good work. I had an insatiable thirst after the word of God and could not miss a good sermon, though many miles off.... I had also a great striving in my heart to draw others to God. It pitied my heart to see men so little to regard their souls, and to despise that happiness which I knew to be better that all the world besides.[3]

At the same time, however, a saint must constantly conquer his flesh (concupiscentia) (Rom 7). For example, Nehemiah Wallington, a London artisan, who was converted in 1621, wrote in his diary: "[I] made a covenant with my eyes that I would not look upon a maid." Despite

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1. "The Life of Dr. Thomas Goodwin; Compos'd out of his own Papers and Memoirs", WTG, V, xi-ii, xiv-v, xix.

2. Kendall, op. cit., 35, 64f.

3. Winthrop Papers, I (Boston, 1929), 156f; quoted in Paul Seaver, Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London (1985), 18.

this, he was still threatened by his imagination and appetite, which he attempted to tame by collecting all biblical texts that condemned "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness" and the seductions of a "strong woman". Having realised that solitude would give free rein to his imagination, he "set up [a] shop" and worked hard at his calling. Even the "honorable state of marriage", he exclaimed, "did not overcome this sin". In desperation, "I thought to have done something to my body." Ultimately, it was the gift of faith that "did allay and quench this fire".[1] In the last analysis, the Jacobean puritans tried to make sure of their salvation by finding in themselves these effects of sanctification: 1) rejoicing in the Lord; 2) having zeal for good works; 3) hungering for God's Word; 4) striving to draw others to Christ; 5) feeling convicted after sinning against God; 6) battling against the flesh; 7) calling upon God with tears; and 8) avoiding all occasions of sin.

In conclusion, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans, in both theory and practice, attempted to create within the Church of England a "communion of saints", the character of which, in the words of Professor Collinson, "inevitably tended towards congregational independency".[2]

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1. GL. MS. 204:16; quoted in Seaver, op. cit., 26f.

2. GP, 3.

III. "Tests" for Church Membership in New England

Before our discussion of the dissenting brethren's predilection for "the better part", it will be helpful to assess the "tests" for church membership in New England. The assessment is to be made in two subsections: A. The "Communion of Saints" in Its New England Version; B. Procedures for Admission.

A. The "Communion of Saints" in Its New England Version

"What things doe you hold to be essentiall and absolutely necessary to the being of a true Visible Church of Christ?" asked Old England puritans, who wrote to the divines in the wilderness in 1637. Richard Mather answered on behalf of the New England elders: "the matter of it [a true visible church], in regard of quality, should be Saints by calling [1 Cor 1:2]."[1] In this regard, Cotton's following utterances in his The Way of Churches of Christ in New England can be viewed as the typical position of the New Englanders on the issue of church membership. To begin with, Cotton called a true visible church "a Communion of Saints, a Combination of faithful godly men... by common and joynt consent". And what is more, he added afterwards, the church is "the habitation of God by the Spirit" (Eph 2:22), "the Temple of the holy Ghost" (1 Cor 3:16-17), and "a chaste Virgin" espoused to Christ (2 Cor 11:1-2). Because of these descriptions, church membership must be restricted to "saints" or the faithful who have "the power of godlinesse". "Saints" or the faithful, in Cotton's opinion, could be compared to the "hewed stones". Inasmuch as the

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1. CGCC, 1, 8.

Temple of Solomon was made of the hewed stones, they must lay no "rough stones" in the building of God's Temple, namely, the church, unless they hewed and prepared them in advance (1 Kgs 6:7).

To support his argument, Cotton cited several biblical passages concerning the admission of church members. In Acts 2:47, it was written, the "Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." Such being the case, how could they "adde to the Church such as God addeth not? such as have no shew of any saving worke upon them to any spiritual discerning?" Also in 2 Chronicles 23:19, the porters at the gates of the Lord's Temple were enjoined not to suffer anyone "uncleane in any thing" to enter the Temple. Since it was so, how could "the Officers of the Church of Christ" suffer those who were "uncleane" to "enter into the fellowship of the Church, which ought to be a Communion of Saints?" In addition, in Matthew 22:11-13, a guest who "comes into the fellowship of his [Christ's] Church, even unto his Table, not having a wedding garment", was said to be cast out. That being the case, how could they receive those who did not wear the robe of righteousness? In short, they must add whom God added, refuse whom God refused, and cast out whom God cast out.[1]

Cotton's position on church membership in The Way of Churches of Christ in New England was in fact a theoretical reflection of the New England practice of testing new members, as will be discussed below.

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1. WCCNE, 1, 56ff. Cotton wrote this treatise in 1642 and then sent it to England for the edification of those who were sympathetic to the "New England way". It circulated at first in England far and wide in manuscript and later in April 1645 in print. See Larzer Ziff (ed.), John Cotton on the Churches of New England (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 26.

B. Procedures for Admission of Church Members

In order to ensure the reality of "saving faith", as Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans had understood it, the New England Congregationals developed a strict "test" for the admission of new members to the church.[1] Since 1633, churches in Massachusetts had begun to examine a candidate's inner experience of grace.[2]

The whole procedure in the test was recorded in the writings of both Thomas Lechford, a hostile observer of Massachusetts,[3] and John Cotton. Lechford related what he had observed in the church of Boston: first of all, the ruling elders asked candidates if they were willing to "make known unto them the worke of grace upon their soules, or how God hath beene dealing with them about their conversion". If they were willing to do so, a man was usually asked to narrate it in a standing posture; while a woman in a sitting posture. If they satisfied "the Elders and the private assembly" and convinced them that they were "true beleevers" who had been "wounded in their hearts for their originall sinne and actuall transgressions", who could "pitch upon

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1. The reason why the New Englanders developed this "test", according to Baird Tipson, was that they tried to confirm their individual certitudo salutis. To this, however, Patricia Caldwell adds that they sought to link the visible church to the invisible one; while C.L. Cohen adds that they tried to declare the presence of "the reason of the hope". See Baird Tipson, "Invisible Saints: The 'Judgment of Charity' in the Early New England Churches", CH, XLIV (1975), 469ff; Patricia Caldwell, The Puritan conversion narrative: the beginnings of American expression (Cambridge, 1983), 108; C.L. Cohen, God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience (Oxford, 1986), 152.

2. MWD, 172; Morgan, Visible Saints, 94f, 98ff.

3. Thomas Lechford (d.1642) was a lawyer in Massachusetts. Being a nonconformist, he migrated to Boston in 1638, but soon found himself out of sympathy with the rigid practice there, which caused him to return to England in 1641 and become a royalist. See Dictionary of American Biography.

some promise of free grace in the Scripture for the ground of their faith", and whose hearts were found to be "drawne to beleeve in Christ Jesus for their justification and salvation", then notice was given by one of the ruling elders that "such a man or woman, by name" desired to join the church, and, therefore, if anyone knew anything held against them, he or she was required to notify the elders thereof, and if anyone knew them and could say anything for their fitness, he or she was asked to give testimony thereof when the candidates were called to give narratives before the whole congregation.[1]

Before the whole congregation, as written by Cotton, the candidates were normally asked:

> How it pleased God to worke in them, to bring them home to Christ, whether the law have convinced them of sinne, how the Lord hath wonne them to deny themselves and their own righteousnesse, and to rely on the righteousnesse of Christ....

And finally they were asked to make "a briefe confession, or else an answer to a few questions about the maine fundamentall points of Religion".[2]

It should be noted here that the above practice was totally novel to both puritans and Separatists in England, who had never required a candidate to offer the congregation the narration of his or her inward experience of grace.[3] As a matter of fact, what the Congregationals practised in New England was a logical conclusion of what the puritans

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1. Thomas Lechford, Plain Dealing; or Nevvs from New-England (1642), 5. Cf. WCCNE, 54; CGCC, 8.

2. A Coppy of a Letter of John Cotton (n.p., 1641), 5. See also CGCC, 23. On the report of Lechford, the candidate was normally asked to declare "the work of grace in his soule" for around "a quarter of an houre". See Lechford, op. cit., 8.

3. For instance, William Ames only required a candidate to make a "confession of Faith and promise of obedience". See Ames, Marrow, I, 32:17. For Separatists' view, see infra, 81.

and Separatists had envisaged but failed to achieve in England. It was due to the failure to achieve and build a new Israel in their home country that some of the early Stuart puritans withdrew to the "bishop-less" New England, deeming it an ideal place to realise their vision by building a new Israel from scratch with the minimum reference to the institution of the Old World.[1] Hence the practice of testing new members, a practice which lasted until 1662 when the New England churches had to adopt the "Half-Way Covenant", whereby the second generation without necessarily becoming visible saints was admitted to church membership by a mere profession of obedience, and thus enabled to have its children baptised.[2]

The test in Massachusetts, in the eyes of William Rathband, a Scottish Presbyterian divine, was too rigid a practice, for "they require first that they be all reall Saints, sincere beleevers, not onely having common gifts, but also saving graces, that they be not common but choice Christians." He complained about the New England requirement that a candidate give a point-by-point conversion narrative:

> The speciall things they drive at are to finde some degree of legall terrours, Evangelicall mourning for sin, desire after Christ, and upon what Promise the soule was quieted.... The chief Points that the Church desires to be satisfied in are concerning the cutting off from the old Adam, and a mans ingraffing [sic] into Christ, how the Law hath had its worke, how the Gospell its worke, what sight a man hath had of sinne, &c? ... whether they have yet closed with their Redeemer in any sweet Promise, or be still in a waiting, expecting condition, staying the time when the Holy Ghost will stirre up the act of Faith....[3]

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1. Cf. Avihu Zakai, "The Gospel of Reformation: the origins of the Great Puritan Migration", JEH, XXXVIII (1986), 602.

2. Alan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England (Chicago, 1955), 35.

3. William Rathband, A Briefe Narration of Some Church Courses

In order to clear up the "misunderstanding" of the Presbyterians, Thomas Welde (d.1661), pastor of First Roxbury, Massachusetts, wrote an apology for their practice. He claimed that they were not looking for "eminency of grace", but for "an heart smitten with sense of sin and need of Christ, joyned with a blamelesse conversation".[1] Actually Cotton had expressed the same idea two years ago, when he declared:

> nevertheless, in this triall, wee doe not exact eminent measure, either of knowledge, or holiness, but doe willingly stretch out our hands to receive the weak in faith, such in whose spirits wee can discerne the least measure of breathing and panting after Christ, in their sensible feeling of a lost estate; for we had rather 99 hypocrites should perish through presumption, then one humble soule belonging to Christ, should sinke under discouragement or despaire....[2]

The New England practice of testing candidates for church membership later on found its way into Holland, and finally appeared in a vaguely written form in the Apologeticall Narration, in which the dissenting brethren stated that while they "chose" the "faithful" for church membership, they were charitable enough to receive "the least in Christ".[3]

(1644), 5f, 8.

1. Thomas Welde, An Answer to W.R. His Narration (1644), 18. By "conversation" was meant "repentance for sin past; mortification of sin present; and the obedience of faith". See William Bridge, "The Spiritual Life and in-being of Christ in all believers [preached at Stepney, 1648]", WWB, I, 326.

2. WCCNE, 58. For the "judgment of charity", see Cohen, God's Caress, 149f; Tipson, "Invisible Saints", CH, XLIV, 460-6.

3. Cf. Morgan, Visible Saints, 66.

IV. The Congregational Vision: the Church of "the Better Part"

Having examined the theories and practices provided by both puritans and New England Congregationals, it will be a relatively less complicated task to discuss the dissenting brethren's vision of the church of "the better part". In accordance with "the better part" and the "controversie" mentioned in the Apologeticall Narration, our discussion is to be amassed under these two sections: A. The Congregational View of Qualifications for Church Membership; B. Controversy over the Admission Issue.

A. The Congregational View of Qualifications for Church Membership

The dissenting brethren declared in the Apologeticall Narration that they "chose the better part" only, and that they "received in none but such as all the Churches in the world would by the balance of the Sanctuary acknowledge faithful".[1] In other words, they took in none but the "faithful" and "the better part" for church membership. Now we try to understand what the dissenting brethren meant by the "faithful" and "the better part".

1. The "faithful"

a. Who are the "faithful"?

According to Thomas Goodwin, the word "faithful" signifies one who is either "trully faithful in what he professeth" (Prov 20:6; 2 Tim 2:2) or "Believing" (Jn 10:27). Here both "Believers" and "true

Believers" (Heb 10) are included. "True Believers" or "faithful" must be "Saints" and "Saints" must be "True Believers". These two belong together. As Goodwin argued: "What God has joined, as here, Saints and Believers, let no men put asunder." Professors of the "Doctrine of Faith" must exhibit "a work of Faith wrought by that Doctrine", and further "approve themselves faithful in that Profession, (as Lydia... [Acts 16:15])" and "add evidences of Saintship". In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, he continued, "Sanctification of the Spirit", and "belief of the Truth" are "joined together, and both made necessary to Salvation". Goodwin then highlighted the importance of being a saint and wrote: "You must run through sanctification of the Spirit, or you shall never come to Heaven: You must be pure in heart here, or else you shall never see God [Mt 5:8; Heb 12:14]." Finally, it was concluded that "Faith worketh by love [Gal 5:6]."[1]

For Goodwin, the visible churches must be "the Churches of the Saints". He wrote that St Paul "saies not to all the Saints in Churches, but Churches of the Saints [1 Cor 14:33], as we say Colledges of Schollars, House of Peers... [for] the Primitive [apostolic] constitution acknowledged no other Members" but the godly.[2] It seems that Goodwin endeavoured to make the visible church a facsimile of the invisible one.

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1. AN, 11.

1. Thomas Goodwin, "An Exposition on... Ephesians", WTG, I, 8, 67f. Goodwin's "On Ephesians" published posthumously was originally a series of sermons preached in the early 1640s. See Peter Toon (ed.), Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660 (Cambridge, 1970), 62.

2. Goodwin, "On Ephesians", WTG, I, 7. Italics mine.

But who are the "saints" or "the godly"? With the Congregationals, so-called "saints" or "godly" are not those who have average spirituality, but those who are able to give "a reason of the hope" within them (1 Pet 3:15); not those who have "a Profession of Faith joined with Morality, and no grand scandal", but those who have "such a strictness as will rise to Holiness".[1]

b. The test of the "faithful"

A believer's faithfulness, as the dissenting brethren saw it, could be weighed "by the balance of the Sanctuary". This suggested that "a subjective experience [of salvation] can be detected by objective tests."[2]

As early as 1637, the New England practice of testing applicants for church membership struck a strong resonant chord amongst the English exile churches in Holland. For instance, when Sidrach Simpson wished to join the Rotterdam church, he was required to give "a profession of his faith, and a confession of his experience of the grace of God wrought in him". "For a whole hour," it was reported, "he poured out his soul into our bosoms, and we as heartily embraced him in the bosom of the church."[3] Here it is not difficult for us, as Dr

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1. Goodwin, "On Ephesians", WTG, I, 8; Burton, The Protestation Protested, sig. B4r. Goodwin said: before we "receive men to Ordinances in Churches", we ought to "separate between the precious and unclean vile [Jer 15:20]". See loc. cit. Here the "precious" refers to those who were truly converted (bonus theologus); while the "unclean vile" actually includes those who were "graceless", although orthodox in beliefs and blameless in morality (merely bonus ethicus).

2. Alan Simpson, Puritanism in Old and New England, 25.

3. Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, ed. W.H.D. Longstaffe (1867), 131f.

Nuttall says, to see "the charismatic assumption" of the Congregationals: "The Holy Spirit who has brought men and women into a saving experience of Christ will also enable them to bear witness to it."[1]

By the end of the 1630s, the New England test for membership had become well known to the puritans in England, who had sent letters to their transatlantic brethren in 1637, inquiring about their practice. In response to their inquiry, Richard Mather drafted Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed in 1639, which was later sent over to England and eventually published there on 15 June 1643. It was in this way that the New England practice won its adherents in England.[2] The impact of Massachusetts Bay on England is to be easily detected in Henry Burton's statement: "we... admit of none but such as can give some account of the worke of grace wrought in them... for such onely are fit members of a Church."[3]

One of the biblical reasons why the candidates must be tested, Burton explained, was that the Congregationals did not want to admit "blindly" all applicants and thereupon cast Christ's "pearls" and "holy things" to those whom they did not know. Christ had commended "the Angell of the Church of Ephesus, for not bearing with those that are wicked, and for trying those that sayd they were Apostles, and

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1. VS, 111.

2. Morgan, Visible Saints, 110; H.M. Dexter, The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years as Seen in its Literature (1876-9), 426, 650f. Cf. supra, 67.

3. Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 27.

were not, but were found lyers". Therefore they did not dare to receive "without triall" those who came and professed that they were "Christians" or "godly".[1]

2. "The better part"

Much as the Congregationals laid emphasis on the visible effects of grace, they claimed that they chose for church membership "the better part", rather than the best sort. In puritan terminology, "the better part" actually conveyed the idea that they pushed the standards as far as they could be pushed in the direction of leniency and inclusiveness.[2] Therefore the dissenting brethren wrote in the Apologeticall Narration:

> And yet in this we are able to make this true and just profession also, That the Rules which we gave up our judgements unto, to judge those vve received in amongst us by, vvere of that latitude as would take in any member of Christ, the meanest, in whom there may be supposed to be the least of Christ, and indeed such and no other as all the godly in this Kingdome carry in their bosomes to judge others by.[3]

By "the least of Christ" was actually meant those who had "some measure of Christ" and "some measure of Grace in themselves", who had "the least breathings of Christ" and "the least hintes of truth and sincerity", who "can give some account of the worke of grace... in the least degree, yet in truth", and who were the "weake Lambes" on

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1. Ibid., 45f.

2. In Paul Baynes' opinion, "the better part" referred to those who were not morally perfect. See Paul Baynes, A Commentarie vpon the First Chapter of the Epistle of Saint Pavl, written to the Ephesians (1618), 9.

3. AN, 11f.

Christ's "green Pastures".[1] Obviously the standard by which they tested candidates was not as high as was supposed. Like New England Congregationals, they could condescend to "the least of Christ".

Why did the dissenting brethren want the church members to be the "faithful" and "the better part"? Like Cotton, they compared the church to the Temple in the Old Testament. They were convinced that they were being employed by God to build His Temple, that is, "his Church mysticall". To build His Church meant "to make men Saints".[2] For the Temple, Simpson explained, was made of the "stones and timber" that had been "hewed and squared". As the "stones and timber" must be "hewed and squared" before they were used for building the Temple, so men and women must also be made saints before they were admitted into the church.[3] It is evident that they endeavoured to build a church that was as glorious as the Temple in the ancient times.[4]

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1. Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 27; Bartlet, 'IXNOYPAPHIA, 76; Adam Steuart, Some Observations & Annotations upon the Apologeticall Narration (1644), 24.

2. ZE, 17f, 36.

3. Sidrach Simpson, Reformation's Preservation (1643), "The Epistle".

4. Based on the Aristotelian categories of "four causes" -- material, formal, efficient, and final causes, the Congregationals tried to argue that God is the Temple-builder (efficient cause), that saints are the fit matter (material cause) which He uses to build His Temple, that the covenant bond is the bond (formal cause) by which matter can be knit together to form a glorious Temple (final cause). This logic is discernible in Goodwin's Zervbbabels Encovragement and [Henry Robinson's] The Saints Apologie (1644), 2. See infra, 227f. For the Congregationals' veneration of logic, see Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 111ff.

B. Controversy over the Admission Issue

The dissenting brethren wrote in the Apologeticall Narration that "one great controversie of these times is about the qualification of the Members of the Churches, and the promiscuous receiving and mixture of good and bad."[1] Here the "controversie" referred possibly to the one between Henry Burton and the "Presbyterian" divine, John Geree.[2]

Retaliating against Burton who advocated the superiority of the members of a particular church to those of a national church, John Geree asserted that there was no difference "betweene the members of a National and Particular Church". For God required to be "holy or Saints" both "the Nationall Church of the Iewes" and "Christians" who "are not the members of the Iewish Nationall Church" (Ex 19:6; 1 Pet 1:14-16). But they were "holy or Saints" only in terms of profession, not in terms of calling. If "the Nationall Church of the Iewes", he argued, were called to be "holy" by profession, could not "all the members of the Apostolicall Churches" be called "Visible Saints... by profession?" If the latter were alleged to be the visible saints by calling, how would it be explained that there were "those that were carnal in Corinth?" That were "scandalous contenders?" (I Cor 6) That were "drunk whe[n] they came to the Sacrament?" That "denyed the Resurrection?" (1 Cor 15:12) That "had not repented of their uncleanesse, fornication, and Lasciviousnesse?" (2 Cor 12:21) And "that traduced the Apostle?" (2 Cor 11) Such being the case, he

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1. AN, 11.

2. For this, see supra, 17f.

continued, could the church of Corinth "be sayd to consist of Saints, or holy people any more then the Iewes?" Could not they be called "Saints, in regard of their Profession?"[1]

Obviously the Presbyterians believed in "the promiscuous receiving and mixture of good and bad". Geree compared the visible church to a "field", wherein are both "Tares and wheat", whose "generall separation" will not take place until "the end of the world" (Mt 13).[2] It was also described by Samuel Rutherford as "a drawnet, wherein are fishes of all sorts"; "a house wherein are vessels of silver... gold... brasse and wood; and a barne-floor wherein are wheat and a chaffe".[3]

It must be added here that the Presbyterians based their view of "promiscuous receiving" on their theological distinction between visible and invisible churches. For, in the Reformed terminology, "the visible Church" refers to "the Militant [Church] upon Earth"; while "the invisible Church", "the Triumphant Church in Heaven". The former professes "the true Faith", although it does not consist exclusively of saints. It is the latter alone that comprises exclusively true "Beleevers... endowed with Justifying Faith".[4] Hence there was no need for them to make the visible church a church of saints or true believers.

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1. John Geree, Vindiciae Voti (1641), sigs. D3r-v.

2. Ibid., sig. D4r. According to Congregationals, "by field is meant the world, which is never called the Church." See Bartlet, op. cit., 58.

3. Samuel Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Pavls Presbyterie in Scotland (1642), 101.

4. Adam Steuart, The Second Part of the Dvply to M.S. alias Two Brethren (1644), 59.

As the controversy developed, the Presbyterians came to criticise the Congregationals for requiring visible effects of grace. For example, Robert Baillie contended that there was no such requirement in the apostolic churches. As a matter of fact, he said, "many members of the Apostolick Churches were so farre from convincing signes of true grace, that the works of the flesh were most evident in their life." In a passage discussing tests of faith, Baillie complained that the Congregationals "much out-runne the Brownists", for the Brownists could admit of those whose "profanenesse was not open and visible," while the Congregationals were rigid enough to take in neither those who had "open profanenesse" nor those who wanted "convincing signs of Regeneration".[1]

To sum up, the focal point of the controversy between Congregationals and Presbyterians was that the latter insisted on taking "a broader way"; while the former, a narrower path.[2] The latter required only a profession of faith of the candidates for church fellowship; while the former, not only a profession of faith (historical faith) but also a profession of the work of faith (saving faith).

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1. Diss., 159, 156. It is true that the Separatists received none "into their communion" but those who "doo make confession of their faith... promising to walke in the obedience of Christ". See Henry Ainsworth, A Trve Confession of the Faith (Amsterdam, 1596), art. 37. Similar to the Separatists, "[the] Reformed Churches receive no man... but such, as give an account of their Faith, and testifie it by externall Confession, and Profession in Doctrine, and Sanctification." See Steuart, Some Observations, 24.

2. Henry Burton stated: "Others may take a broader way, if they please; wee dare not. The Church... is not so slight account with us, as that we should carelesly and promiscuously admit of every one that offer themselves, without some triall of them, both for the Churches satisfaction, and for the account shee must make to Jesus Christ." See Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 46.

V. Perfectionism?

The notion that the Church of Christ must be pure, "without spot and wrinkle" (Eph 5:27), is recurrent throughout Christian history. The advocacy of a strict moral code as a protest against the "mediocrity" of a mass church and as an expression of being an "elite" battalion has characterised Montanists, Novatianists, Donatists, Cathari, Anabaptists, Jansenists, Holiness and Pentecostal groups, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. It seems that the Congregationals can also be categorised as perfectionists; for, as we have seen, they seemed to have had strong perfectionist tendencies.

Were the Congregationals really perfectionists? Despite their attempts to "make the visible church a closer approximation of the invisible than St Augustine probably had in mind",[1] the Congregationals stated that they "chose the better part", rather than only the best sort, for church membership. And despite their attempts to exclude the ungodly and the "graceless" from church membership, they maintained that they were lenient enough to "take in" those who were "the least of Christ", that is, those who could show "the meanest" work of grace. This showed that the Congregationals were not perfectionists. Like the puritans, who were outspoken against the various tendencies to "angelic" perfectionism that emerged from time to time,[2] they were Calvinists with a deep appreciation of the doctrine of original sin!

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1. Morgan, Visible Saints, 4, 93.

2. For instance, Perkins believed that Christian life on this earth is always made up of cycles of sin, repentance, and recovery, because there is a big gap between God and man, the perfect and imperfect. See LAL, 293.

To prove that the Congregationals were Calvinists rather than Anabaptists, we shall examine the thought of Thomas Goodwin, one of the leading spokesmen of the Congregationals. Far from the Anabaptist view that holiness is the sine qua non of an authentic church, Goodwin maintained that "the perfection, beauty... and glory of the temple is not absolutely necessary to the being of a church,"[1] because "in this life" there is only the "imperfect holiness of Grace", only "in the World to come" will there be "that perfect holiness". We can discern Goodwin's typical Calvinistic stand in his statement:

> Christ will sanctifie and cleanse his Church, which is for the present but imperfectly holy, that he may present it to himself glorious, without spot or wrinkle.... ... Our Imperfect holiness is indeed, Holiness before him in truth and sincerity; but it is not... without blame: It is not such as he can fully and perfectly delight in. ... That God hath ordained unto all those whom he hath chosen a Perfect holiness, and... blameless[ness] before him; which one day they shall certainly be. [As] Paul in the Phil. 3.12. wisheth that he might apprehend that perfection in Grace, for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus.[2]

It is evident that Goodwin believed only in the sanctification, not the perfection of the church militant in this world. For him, only the church triumphant in the world to come can enjoin sanctity and glorification. As the puritan theologian William Ames pointed out, "in this life we are more properly said to have sanctification then holinesse, and in the life to come: holinesse only, and not sanctification."[3]

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1. The Expositions of that Famous Divine Thomas Goodwin... on the Book of Revelation (1842), 648.

2. Goodwin, "On Ephesians", WIG, I, 67. Goodwin's stand was the same as that of Calvin, who wrote: "The Church is holy... in the sense that it is daily advancing and is not yet perfect: it makes progress from day to day but has not yet reached its goal of holiness...." See Inst., IV, 1:17.

3. Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, I, 29:16.

In a Reformed sense, sanctification always refers to an ongoing process, in which, according to Ames, "all that are truly sanctified doe tend unto perfection, Mat. 5.48. 1 Cor. 13.11. 2 Pet. 3.18." In other words, the simul peccator is gradually dissolved, and eros is gradually changed into agape. For the saint is semper peccator intrinsically and semper justus extrinsically; he is what Ames called "a double forme, [that of] sin and [that of] grace".[1]

Conclusion

It is obvious that the Congregationals were provided by the puritans with both theory and practice regarding the church as a "communion of saints". In Elizabethan and Jacobean England, while the reformation of the Church of England on a national scale was out of the question, the reform of the Church at parochial level was still conceivable. Thus the puritans "gathered" the godly within the parishes (ecclesiolae in ecclesia). These voluntarily gathered groups, in reality, anticipated the Congregational churches emerging in the 1640s and 1650s. The godly who constituted these groups, according to Professor Collinson, "were in some degree from the beginning a people apart, their situation had always been one of de facto Independency."[2] No wonder that the Congregationals insisted on admitting into church fellowship only "the better part" and the "faithful" -- those who had "the Practical part" of divinity, namely, "the power of godlinesse".

As a result of the dual stress of the Elizabethan puritans on a national church of good and bad and gathered churches of the godly, the Presbyterians were content to take in all professing believers, while the Congregationals limited church membership to "the better part" only. Influenced by the New England practice of testing applicants for church membership, the Congregationals obliged church members, at their first admission, to show the whole congregation convincing signs of their regeneration and true grace, that is, to manifest what God had done for them. The admitting of unsaved persons into church fellowship became "the great partition wall" between Congregationals and Presbyterians.[3]

Showing little concern for the distinction between the visible and invisible churches, the Congregationals maintained that the visible church should be made up exclusively of the Christians de

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1. Ibid., I, 29:29. Cf. Inst., IV, 1:17,21-3.

2. GP, 540.

3. Diss., 155.

facto, rather than Christians de jure. They seemed to allow of perfectionism in practice; but they definitely disowned it, at least, in theory. Actually they agreed with the puritans in thinking "perfection... a thing rather to be desired, then hoped for".[1] For them, the "perfection" is necessary, but "is not absolutely necessary". "Holiness" does not mean that Christians should be morally "angelic" and "without blame" coram Deo; but rather, that Christians should be spiritually longing for Christ (holiness "in sincerity"), or living to God in faith. To come to the point, the Congregationals expected the visible church to be a community of visibly imperfect saints, "the better part", rather than the best one.

Contrary to the Presbyterian idea of "promiscuous receiving... of good and bad" that only allowed for a territorial national church, the Congregational idea of choosing "the better part" and the "faithful" was applied only to a local gathered church. This idea did jeopardise the traditional concept of a universal church and highlighted the importance of a particular church, about which there will be a discussion in chapter three. The idea of gathering God's elect out of the "unbelieving" world into a holy Gemeinschaft had actually something to do with the "sect-ideal".[2] Hence the next chapter answers the question: were the Congregationals "sectarians"?

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1. John Geree, The Character of an old English Pvritane or Non-Conformist (1646), 4.

2. The first covenantedly "gathered" church can be traced back to 21 January 1525, when the layman, Conrad Grebel, rebaptised the ex-priest, George Blaurock, at Felix Mantz's house in Zürich. G.H. Williams remarks that this was "the first true sect of the Reformation era", formed when the sacramentarians separated from the "unbelieving" world, that is, "the idolatrous realm of papal Christendom" and "the oppressive jurisdiction of a magisterially reformed cantonal republic". See G.H. Williams, The Radical Reformation (1962), 119f.

CHAPTER TWO

"CHURCHES" OR "SECTS"?

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren complained that their "opinions and practices" had been commonly misunderstood and misrepresented, and that their "persons" had been calumniated and reproached by "men of much worth, learning, and authority" (possibly Gillespie, Rutherford, Paget, Voetius, Edwards, and Herle),[1] who, having "prejudice" against them, aimed to "pre-possesse the peoples minds" against what they supposed to be the "Tenets" of Independency. Actually they complained that they had been misunderstood and misrepresented as opposing all authority both "Civill" and "Spirituall", that is, both state and church (the Church of England); and that they had been charged with being Separatists or "Brownists", who claimed that they were "independent" of both state and church.[2] In order to clear up all these "misunderstandings and misrepresentations", the dissenting brethren stressed that they had as great a respect for both state and church as even the most orthodox Presbyterians. Thus they made every effort to minimise the extent to which they differed from the Presbyterians, and to magnify the extent to which they differed from the Separatists. Evidently they were

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1. Anta., 124f, 232f. Gisbert Voetius (d.1676) was a Dutch Reformed theologian, who forcefully defended the doctrine of predestination at the Synod of Dort. See The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. F.L. Cross (Oxford, 1983). For Paget, see infra, 142.

2. AN, 25, 5, 23. Cf. infra, 121ff.

attempting to convince the orthodox Presbyterians of their church way, so that they might tolerate it once the presbyteries were established in England.

As mentioned before, one of the main functions of the Apologeticall Narration was, positively, to show where the Congregationals stood in relation to the state and the other churches (the Church of England and the Reformed Churches), and negatively, to defend their church way from the imputation of "Brownisme" or Separatism. The dissenting brethren's approaches to both state and church were greatly influenced by Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans and New England Congregationals. In view of this, this chapter is divided into six major sections. First comes a sociological distinction between the tenets of the church and the tenets of the sect. Then follows an examination of the Separatists' radical approaches to both the state and the mainline churches. Next, there will be investigations of both Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' and New England Congregationals' moderate approaches to the state and the Church of England. After this, the discussion of the Congregationals' moderate approaches to the state and the mainline churches comes to the fore, which is to be followed by a treatment of the Congregational church worship and ministry. Moreover, in each of these major sections, except the first and last ones, two subsections are arranged: A. Their Approach to the Relationship between Church and State; B. Their Approach to the Church of England (and the Reformed Churches). By this means, we can see clearly how the Congregationals and Separatists differed from each other, and how the Congregationals owed much to Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans and New Englanders in their views of the state and the mainline churches.

I. Sociological Distinction between "Church" and "Sect"

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren seemed to have noticed the dichotomy between "Churches" and "sects". In Holland, "Churches" whose "characters are... proper to... Orthodoxe Churches" were what the Dutch Reformed Church recognised, while "sects" were what the Dutch Reformed Church "tollerate, but not own".[1] Realising that "sects" had no reputation, the dissenting brethren were averse to being ranked with "sects".[2] By "sects" they actually meant all the religious extremists, including the Separatists or "Brownists".[3]

What was the difference between "Churches" and "sects" sociologically? It might be helpful for us to use Ernst Troeltsch's church and sect typology as a basis for our analysis of this difference.

According to Troeltsch, the church is an "institution" with "the objective treasures of grace and of redemption". As "the eternal existence of the God-Man", "the extension of the Incarnation", and "the great educator" of the masses, the church seeks to receive and educate the masses and aims at the active remaking of the whole society. Accordingly it favours the concept of the "State Church". The

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1. AN, 7. See also Pagitt, Heresiography, 58: "The Magistrates of Amsterdam... held them [Separatists] not as a Church, but as a Sect." Also "the Dutch Church... did not acknowledge theirs to be... a lawfull Church."

2. AN, 7. The original text is: "all those sects... and all the assemblies of them (which yet now we are here some would needs ranke us with)." Here the dissenting brethren said sarcastically that when they had been in Holland, the Dutch Reformed Church categorised theirs as "Churches"; however, when they were now in England, the "Presbyterians" must needs rank them with "sects".

3. AN, 5.

church also lays emphasis on the objective holiness of priesthood, hierarchy, sacrament and the legacy of the Faith, rather than on subjective holiness.

On the other hand, the sect is "a voluntary society", composed of "strict" believers bound to each other by the fact that all have gone through the same conversion experiences. These believers separate themselves from the "world, the state, and society", and within their own circle set up the Christian brotherhood, preparing for and expecting the coming Kingdom of God. As a result, they condemn the world and want to separate church and state, so that the church will not be contaminated by the state. Moreover, they cut themselves off and isolate themselves from the mainstream of "the ecclesiastical tradition", dogmatically asserting that they alone own the "truth", which "is far beyond the spiritual grasp of the masses and of the State", and accusing the church of having fallen away from the ideal of the primitive Christianity. The sect tends to be legalistic as well. It thinks nothing of "the objective impartation of Grace through the Sacrament", but much of "individual personal effort".[1]

Troeltsch's argument can be summarised as these antitheses: the church is a comprehensive ark of salvation; the sect is an exclusive fellowship of saints. The church is the "broad way"; the sect is the "narrow gate". The church is "leaven"; the sect is "salt". The church offers the broken bread; the sect demands the drinking of the cup of the passion. The church emphasises sacramental grace; the sect, ethical achievements. The church adapts to the world and its culture;

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1. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon, I (N.Y., 1931), 229, 331, 333f, 336-9; II, 993, 998.

the sect is either indifferent or hostile to the world. The church is more "this-worldly"; the sect is more "other-worldly" and parousial in its outlook. The church is more catholic; the sect is more cliquish and bigoted. The church is more conservative; the sect is more innovative.

While appreciating Troeltsch's valuable contribution to our understanding of the church, we must point out that Troeltsch's typology in effect polarises both sides of the church-sect divide and fails to see the partial overlap between them. According to this twofold typology, historical dissenters outside the Church of England, such as Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, even Presbyterians in England should all be unfairly categorised as "sects". But the fact is that these dissenters had some characteristics of a church combined with other features that were characteristic of a sect. This led to the proposal that the church and sect typology should be reconsidered, which is to be discussed later in chapter five.

As noted before, Calvinism, through Bucer, had an implicit, if tenuous, connection with Anabaptism.[1] On the one hand, Calvinism maintained the relationship of church and state; on the other, it was often associated with rigorism, legalism and austerity. Because of this, Calvinism seemed to be a halt between Lutheranism and Anabaptism. It thus contained both church-ideal and sect-ideal, both culture and sub-culture.[2] That is why Troeltsch called the Calvinist church "the church... set up, maintained, and kept pure as a community

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1. Supra, 52n.

2. Cf. J.H. Leith, Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community (Atlanta, 1978), 76f, 188, 205.

of saints closely connected with the state and with society".[1]

Being the daughters of Calvinism, puritans and Separatists in Elizabethan and early Stuart England, according to Dr Brachlow, had their paradoxical emphasis on both "magisterial coercion in religious causes" and the gathered and "voluntary nature of [the] true church".[2] Thus they both, to some extent, shared each other's views. However it might be argued that the more conservative puritans, without rejecting the sect-ideal, laid more emphasis on the church-ideal; the Separatists, without altogether overlooking some sort of church-ideal, focused largely on the sect-ideal; and the more advanced puritans seemed to share both church and sect ideals.[3]

Puritans and Separatists differed from each other primarily in their attitudes toward the Church of England by law established. Both Elizabethan and early Stuart puritans abhorred separation from the Church. The reason was that for all the Church of England's corruption in its discipline, its status was still validated as a true church by the truly godly within it. Whereas the puritans chose to stay in the spiritual "Babylon", the Separatists, on the other hand, decided to cross the Rubicon, contending that the Church of England had completely lapsed, hence separation from it became necessary.

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1. Troeltsch, op. cit., II, 599. For Calvin's assertion that God's concern is not only the rule of the hearts of the faithful, but also, in wider scope, the rule of the entire created realm. See H.A. Oberman, "The 'Extra' Dimension in the Theology of Calvin", JEH, XXI (1970), 44-8.

2. CS, 265, 270.

3. Of the typology of puritanism, George Yule said: "there was hardly one Puritan group that was either pure sect-type or pure church-type, for since Calvin the two ideals had been brought very close together." See Yule, The Independents in the English Civil War, 7.

The dissenting brethren preferred to align themselves with the puritans who took the route of non-separation, rather than rank themselves with the Separatists who took the route of separation. Concerning the latter, they stated that "we had likewise the fatall miscarriages and shipwracks of Separation (whom ye call Brownists) as Land-marks to fore-warn us of those rocks and shelves they ran upon." It was these "fatall miscarriages" and "shipwracks of Separation", they declared, that put them on the alert against the sectarian "principles" of separation from the Church.[1]

II. The Separatists' Radical Approaches to the State and the Mainline Churches

A. Their Radical Approach to the Relationship between Church and State

At the same time as the Separatists shared the puritan view and saw nothing wrong in the church looking to "the outward prouision & outward iustice" of the state, and in magistrates, modelled on the kings of Judah, using "their authoritie" to "enforce" outward conformity in "pure relligion" and to "suppresse" all "monuments of Idolatry and superstition" by swords,[2] they agreed paradoxically with

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1. AN, 4f.

2. The Writings of Robert Harrison and Robert Browne, ed. Albert Peel & Leland H. Carlson (1953), 164; Ainsworth, A Trve Confession, art. 39. The Separatists were always stereotyped as advocating a complete separation of spiritual and civil spheres. See A.F.S. Pearson, Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth Century Puritanism (Cambridge, 1928), 105; Gustafsson, op. cit., I, 263ff; White, The English Separatist Tradition, 58ff. However, recent scholarship has shown that the Separatists actually embraced in

the Anabaptists in polarising the church-state relationship, in objecting to the countenance given by the magistrate to the church, and in stressing the voluntary character of religion.[1] Robert Browne,[2] for instance, announced that church and state attended to their respective duties; they were not to be overlapped:

> the outwarde power and ciuil forcings, let vs leaue to the Magistrates: to rule the common wealth in all outwarde iustice, belongeth to them: but let the Church rule in spirituall wise, and not in worldlie maner: by a liuelie lawe preached, and not by a ciuill lawe written....[3]

Hence his rallying cry: "reformation without tarying for anie [of the magistrates]". By this he meant that the magistrate was not entitled to further reformation. He explained that "the Lordes kingdome is not by force.... Neither durst Moses, nor anie of the good Kings of Iuda force the people, by lawe or by power, to receiue the church gouernement;" and that "the Lords people is of the willing sorte. They shall come vnto Zion and inquire the way unto Ierusalem, not by force nor compulsion, but with their faces thitherward." Thus it was concluded that "to co[m]pell religion, to plant churches by power, and to force a submission to Ecclesiastical gouernement, by lawes &

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their understanding of the state the same ideology that characterised the puritan thought. See MWD, 47f; CS, 248, 252f, 265f. For the puritan view, see infra, 101-4, 266n.

1. For Anabaptist view, see Avis, op. cit., 55f.

2. Robert Browne (1550?-1633) was ordained in 1573 and was later imprisoned for his advocacy of separation. See DNB.

3. The Writings of... Robert Browne, 167. Actually Calvin's view of the church-state relationship had much in common with that of Browne. However, the difference between both views is that Calvin thought of church and state as two sides of one and the same coin; whereas Browne considered them as two separate realms. For Calvin's view, see infra, 104.

penalties belongeth not to them."[1] In like manner, Henry Barrow (d.1593), who was imprisoned and eventually martyred for Separatist cause, suggested that religion is a voluntary undertaking, and therefore, independent of the magistrate and his power to control. For him, it was wrong to ask the magistrate for help in the gathering of churches.[2] The Separatists' paradoxical stress on "compulsion" and "voluntaryism" could be understood as what Barrow said:

> We acknowledge that the prince ought to compell al their subjects to the hearing of God's word in the publique exercises of the church [compulsion]: yet cannot the prince compell any to be member of the church [voluntaryism].[3]

The attitude of the Separatists as a whole toward the state was also paradoxical. Browne and Barrow not only expressed their loyalty to the Queen but also dissuaded others from speaking against her and the magistrates under her,[4] while John Robinson,[5] on the other hand, articulated his hostility to the state, when he said: "The kings of the earth... and such as were in authority under them... these kinds of men were rather to be prayed against, than for, by the servants of

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1. The Writings of... Robert Browne, 161f, 164.

2. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590, ed. L.H. Carlson (1962), 557f. For Henry Barrow, see DNB.

3. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1590-1591, ed. L.H. Carlson (1966), 40. Cf. CS, 253. Compare this with the puritan opinion in infra, 102.

4. The Writings of... Robert Browne, 152; Henry Ainsworth & Francis Johnson, An Apologie or Defence of Such True Christians As are commonly (but vniustly) called Brownists (n.p., 1604), 92; CS, 247.

5. John Robinson (1576-1625) was Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, between 1598 and 1604. After that, he held a cure at Norwich and was suspended in 1605. Later he pastored a congregation at Scrooby. To avoid being persecuted, he and his Scrooby congregation migrated to Amsterdam in 1608, and then to Leiden in 1609. He was known as pastor of the "Pilgrim Fathers". See BDBR.

Christ."[1] As a matter of fact, the Separatists' paradoxical utterances reflected, to some extent, the biblical teachings regarding attitudes toward the state. Christians should obey the rule of all rulers whose power is willed by God. However, it is also suggested that earthly authority is evil because the world is ruled by Satan.

B. Their Radical Approaches to the Church of England and the Reformed Churches

Although it is open to debate whether the Separatists owed their ideology to the Anabaptists,[2] yet it is undeniable that the English radicals did not disagree with the Continental radicals in suggesting that where there is no separation from the false church, there is no true church.[3] A "true church", according to John Greenwood,[4] is

> a companie of faithfull people; separated from the unbelevers [sic] and heathen of the land [i.e., the "world" or the professing members of the Church of England]; gathered in the name of Christ... thier [sic] only king...; joyned together as members of one bodie; ordered and governed by such officers and lawes as Christ... hath thereunto ordeyned; all and each one of them standing in and for thier christian libertie to practise whatsoever God hath commaunded... in his holie word....[5]

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1. The Works of John Robinson, ed. Robert Ashton, III (1851), 20.

2. For the debate, see White, op. cit., xii, 161-4.

3. For Anabaptist view, see Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers, ed. G.H. Williams (1957), 230f, 246; F.H. Littell, The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism: a Study of the Anabaptist View of the Church (N.Y., 1964), 89ff; Avis, op. cit., 58.

4. John Greenwood (d.1593), a Cambridge man, was imprisoned with Barrow for holding a "conventicle". See DNB.

5. The Writings of John Greenwood 1587-90, ed. L.H. Carlson (1962), 98. Italics mine.

The "separation [of the true church] from the false church", they argued, had occurred time and again throughout ecclesiastical history since the very beginning when "light was separated fro[m] darknes". The argument was illustrated by Henry Ainsworth as follows:

> The first man Adam saw it, in the separation of Seths posterity from Cains. Noah did the like, in Sems posterity from Chams. Abram was called out of Chaldee; Lot out of Sodom; Israel, out of AEgypt and Babel; faithful Iudah, from rebellious Israel; Christs disciples, from faithlesse Iewes and Gentiles; and all the Lords people, from your confused Babylon. Yea God himself did first teach it, when he made a separation between the womans seed and the Serpentes.[1]

Owing to this Weltanschauung, the Separatists were almost unanimously antagonistic to the Church of England which was conjoined with the state.

In the opinion of the Separatists, the Church of England was not a church at all. As to why it was not a church, Ainsworth explained:

> 1. as not being a co[m]munion of Saincts [sic], a people caled & separated from the world, & brought into covenant with God; 2. as not worshiping him aright in spirit & truth according to his own law, but after humane inventions [i.e., the Book of Common Prayer]; 3. as not having the ecclesiastical regiment & ministrie prescribed in Christs testament, but an other received from the Romane Antichrist.[2]

In the final analysis, the Church of England had no discipline or "ban" (evangelical separation). Without discipline or ban, Barrow contended, "there can be no Church, no ministerie, no communion."[3] Such being the case, Separatists like Barrow and Ainsworth assailed the Church of England with every kind of invective they could think

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1. Henry Ainsworth, Covnterpoyson (Amsterdam, 1608), 37. Henry Ainsworth (d.1622), a Cambridge man, went to Amsterdam in 1593 and was later appointed teacher of the Separatist church, of which Francis Johnson was pastor. See BDBR.

2. Henry Ainsworth, Certayne Qvestions (Amsterdam, 1605), 10f. See also White, op. cit., 71.

3. Quoted in Avis, op. cit., 63.

of. Phrases like the "false", "counterfeit", and "adulterous church", "a wicked assembly", "your church and whole ministerie being accursed" were used with abandon.[1] The Church of England was also anathematised as an "Antichristian" Church, out of which "all that will bee saued, [bound] by Gods Commandments, must vvith speed come forth."[2] "In this estate," Barrow questioned, "what communion is to be held with them? What fellowship may the children of God have with such rebels, and apostataes?"[3]

But what did the Separatists think of the godly who were still "captive" in the "confused Babylon"? Robinson, for instance, indiscriminately considered all who remained in the parish churches, both godly and ungodly, as those who "worship the Beast and his Image, and so make themselves subject to the Wrath of God".[4] Barrow portrayed the best preachers in the parish churches as

> disguised hypochrites... ravening wolves which come to us in sheepe's clothing, under glorious and swelling titles of pastors, teachers, preachers and ministers of the gospel, men of great learning, of very holy life, and of great sinceritie, seekers and sighers for reformation, such as abhor and cry out against the bishops....

"These Phariseis," he continued, "mislead the people in their crooked and bye pathes of death." Then it was concluded that "they are the ministers of Sathan, of antichrist, sent of God in his wrath to

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1. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590, 306, 502.

2. Ainsworth, A Trve Confession, arts. 31, 32.

3. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590, 305.

4. Quoted in Diss., 34. As a matter of fact, Separatists like Robinson, Smyth, and Johnson all avowed that those who yet remained in the Church of England were apostates and ipso facto stood condemned. See The Works of John Smyth, ed. W.T. Whitley, II (Cambridge, 1915), 354-73; Francis Johnson, A Treatise of the Ministery of the Church of England (n.p., 1595), 31-5.

deceave and destroie such as are ordeined to death;" and that "all their administrations, sacramentes, sermons is accursed, how holy soever, or neere the truth in outward shew."[1]

The fact that there were the godly in the Church of England, according to Professor von Rohr, "did not really alter the situation in the Separatist view with respect to the ecclesiastical validity of entire congregations".[2] But on the other hand, the religious situation in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, as Professor Collinson observes, had its "dynamic, fluid and even paradoxical features".[3] This also found expression in Separatist attitudes toward the Church of England and the godly people within it. For instance, Francis Johnson (d.1618), pastor of the Separatist church in Amsterdam, contradicted his former view[4] by acknowledging that the Church of England and even the Church of Rome were the Churches of God, for God's grace was greater than their apostasies.[5] And Robinson later charitably acknowledged that in the Church of England there were "many sound... truths taught", and that many thousands of its members were the godly people, who might be saved by their "ignorance", and with whom they could lawfully join in hearing the Word preached.[6] The paradox of their utterances could probably be interpreted as this: in terms of

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1. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590, 342f, 438.

2. John von Rohr, "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus: An Early Congregational Version", CH, XXXVI (1967), 109.

3. Supra, 3f.

4. Supra, 97n. For Francis Johnson, see BDBR.

5. Francis Johnson, A Christian Plea (n.p., 1617), 120f; MWD, 51; DP, 340; CS, 154.

6. Dexter, op. cit., 394; The Works of John Robinson, III, 349, 107ff; CS, 68. For the "ignorance" argument, see infra, 219f.

its ordinary status, the Church of England, to some extent, could be called a church; but, in terms of its legal status, it could not be called so, because of its idolatry that broke its covenant bond with God.[1]

Now we are to look at what the Separatists thought of the Reformed Churches. The Separatists deemed wrong such practices in the Reformed Churches as 1) receiving "the whole state... into the bozome of the church"; 2) admitting "vnrepentant excommunicates" into the church; 3) setting up "councell", "synode", and "classes", which were "antichristian"; and 4) choosing a "prolocutor" and "moderator" for ordering "the action". Also they deplored the survival in these Churches of many "idolatrous monuments", such as 1) "certaine prayers invented and imposed by men"; 2) observance of "certayn dayes in the yeare", such as "the Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension of Christ"; 3) "Idol-temples", i.e., "churches" that were built in the time of popery; 4) celebration of "Marriage in the Church"; and 5) all "set-maintenance" for ministers.[2] Because of these practices and "idolatrous monuments", the Separatists condemned all the Reformed Churches as "Antichritian" or "corrupt" Churches, from which a separation was necessary. As Johnson declared:

> by the mercy of God we haue seen and forsaken the corruptions yet remayning in... [the French and Dutch] Churches... we therefore cannot partake with them in such case, without declining and

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1. CS, 52, 68. The Separatists, like the later Congregationals, believed that "covenant" was essential and constitutive for the being of a church. But, for the latter, there were both "implicit" and "explicit" covenants (see infra, 110, 124, 129); while, for the former, there was only "explicit" covenant.

2. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-1590, 316, 669f; Francis Johnson, An Inqvirie and Ansvver of Thomas VVhite (n.p., 1606), 78ff; idem, A Christian Plea, 318.

apostasy from the truth.[1]

It should be added here that the Separatist attitude toward the Reformed Churches was also vague. But, by and large, they acknowledged the Reformed Churches to be "the Churches of Christ", with whom they agreed "both in the faith of Christ, and in many things concerning the order and government of the church".[2] Their position to the Reformed Churches, according to Keith Sprunger, "was comparable to the position taken by the non-Separatist puritans to the Church of England: although a true church, it was defective."[3]

What underlay the Separatist view of radical separation from what they called false churches was probably their eschatological conviction that there would be a "suddaine... desolation" for the antichristian churches. As Lot "forsooke" the city of Zoar "for feare of the same iust iudgement, which had ouertaken the rest of the Cities", so the Separatists believed that it was high time for them to flee the city of "Babylon", lest they be perished therein.[4]

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1. Johnson, Inqvirie, 26. See also Pagitt, Heresiography, 54, 56.

2. Johnson, Plea, 245. Cf. The Works of John Robinson, III, 8.

3. DP, 337f.

4. Joseph Hall, A Common Apologie of Chvrch of England (1610), 33, 116; Stephen Brachlow, "John Robinson and the Lure of Separatism in Pre-Revolutionary England", CH, XL (1981), 290f. Cf. White, op. cit., 160.

III. The Puritans' Moderate Approaches to the State and the Church of England

A. Their Moderate Approach to the Relationship between Church and State

Calvin had made it clear that church and state should be functionally distinguished. However, he added that, although these two distinct kingdoms were not to be confounded, as the pope had wrongly done, they were not entirely separated. Church and state both had respective "sacred" ministries from God. The ministers preached the true faith, while the magistrate maintained and defended it. The ministers taught and expounded the divine law, while the magistrate saw to it that both tables of the law were diligently observed. Actually, for Calvin, church and state were two aspects of one social entity. It must be noted here that Calvin did not give the magistrate power to decide questions of doctrine or hold ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The role of the magistrate was merely executive.[1]

Following Calvin's teaching, both Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans described the church-state relationship as one between twins -- separate yet closely linked.[2] The church, Thomas Cartwright affirmed, was an independent realm ruled by its ministers, but it did not follow from hence that the state was a purely secular body and that there should be no kind of interplay between church and state.[3]

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1. Inst., IV, 20:1-10; Avis, op. cit., 147f. It was on this point that Calvin's long struggle with the Geneva town council hinged.

2. Cf. CS, 234.

3. Avis, op. cit., 148. Cf. The Works of John Whitgift, III, 189. Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) was elected Fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge in 1562 and then Lady Margaret Professor of

On the contrary, the magistrate was encouraged to act as the nursing father of the church, who could summon a "generall assemblie" of ministers, who could judge or arbitrate cases of ecclesiastical corruption and disorder, who could annul an unlawful election in the church, and who could even make ecclesiastical laws according to "the worde of God".[1] For the magistrate had the duty to carry out a religious reformation and to maintain and defend true religion;[2] although he had, at the same time, to leave room for religious voluntaryism, that is, the free exercise of private consciences in religious matter.[3] Despite his nursing role in external affairs of the church, the magistrate was not allowed to "usurp the authority of ministers or to dictate to the church about its own internal affairs".[4] The former Lady Margaret Professor asserted that "the Christian Magistrate may boeth be assistant, and haue his voice in such assemblies;" although in "church matters", he must firmly obey the ministers of the church, to whom "the principal autority belo[n]geth... in the decision of the doctrine... in the chois of the variable ceremonies of the church".[5] He even put it in a less tactiful

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Divinity in 1569. He lectured against the constitution of the Church of England and was hence deprived of his both professorship and fellowship between 1570 and 1571. See DNB.

1. The Works of John Whitgift, I, 419; The Seconde Parte of a Register, I, 308; A parte of a register, 396; CS, 233, 235, 238.

2. Avis, op. cit., 148f; Puritan Manifestoes, 85f.

3. This paradox was explained by Cartwright as this: while the magistrate should not force people to participate in the sacraments of the church, he should compel them to hear the Word preached and punish idolaters. See CS, 232f.

4. Avis, op. cit., 149. Cf. The Works of John Whitgift, III, 189.

5. Thomas Cartwright, The rest of the second replie (n.p., 1577), 167, 170; CS, 238.

way: the magistrate must "lick the dust of the feet of the church [Is 49:23]".[1] No wonder Richard Hooker remarked that Cartwright's view of the state sounded like that of the papists.[2] But, in effect, what Cartwright demanded was not the dominance of the church over the state, but the independence of the church in its own realm.

Henry Jacob affirmed that "the Church governement is independent and immediately derived from Christ," yet he equally affirmed that "the Civil Magistrate is even therein Supreme Governor Civilly."[3] By the civil or external rule of the magistrate over the church, Jacob meant that the magistrate possessed the power not only "to ordeine and enact lawes ecclesiasticall", but also to oversee and censure all the "particular Churches in the case of their misgovernement".[4] In addition, the magistrate, as William Bradshaw saw it, had power "to convene Synods... to ratifie... their Canons and Constitutions" and "to force the redress thereof, yet though it be without the consent of

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1. The Works of John Whitgift, III, 189; CS, 239.

2. Avis, op. cit., 149. See also The Works of John Whitgift, III, 554. Richard Hooker (1554-1600) was named Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford in 1577, and then Master of the Temple church in London in 1585. He was an anglican theologian par excellence. See DNB.

3. Henry Jacob, An Attestation of many Learned, Godly, and famous Divines (n.p., 1613), 115.

4. Henry Jacob, To the right High and mightie Prince, Iames (n.p., 1609), 13f; CS, 224. With the Presbyterians and Congregationals in the 1640s, to ordain laws ecclesiastical and to censure erring churches were not civil or external, but spiritual or internal affairs of the church. See infra, 117nn.

the Ecclesiasticall Governours themselves".[1] The magistrate, William Ames said, also had the duty to "promote true Religion, and suppresse impiety".[2]

In a nutshell, the puritans' moderate approach to the relationship between church and state is as Michael Watts writes: "they challenged the rulings of the magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs, but not to the point of denying his authority [over the church]."[3]

B. Their Moderate Approach to the Church of England

While the Separatists believed in the total lapse of the Church of England and thus cut themselves off from the fellowship with the godly within the Church, the puritans in Elizabethan and early Stuart era declined to do so for the godly's sake, but chose to remain in it and reform it from within.

The Elizabethan puritans defended the Church of England by insisting that the administration of the Word and the sacraments is the main ground of a true church. Although Cartwright held that discipline was necessary for the being of a church when he clashed with the primate, John Whitgift,[4] yet he, following Calvin, stressed that it was not so essential as the "ministerie of the worde" and "the

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1. William Bradshaw, Several treatises of Worship and Ceremonies (1660), 83; CS, 242.

2. William Ames, Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof, V (n.p., 1639), 165; CS, 243.

3. MWD, 16.

4. John Whitgift (1530?-1604) became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583. He was an orthodox Calvinist, though he supported anglican ritual and rigorously enforced uniformity. See DNB.

administracon of the sacram[en]ts" for the being of it when he confronted the Separatists.[1] Against Robert Harrison (d.1585), who had helped Browne form a "conventicle", Cartwright wrote:

> to say... it is none of the Church of god because it hath not receiued this discipline, methinkes is... as if a man woulde say it is no citie because it hath no wall, or that it is no vineyarde because it hath neither hedge nor dyke.[2]

He also drew the analogy between the Church of England and an unfaithful wife and reasoned with his sister in law, Mrs Stubbes, another Separatist, that, as a man's wife who had committed adultery was not

> forthw[i]th out of accompt of a wief vntill she beinge convicted thereof, or for that cause divorced from her hausband: So the Church notw[i]thstandinge her sp[irit]uall adult[er]y, is not vnchurched... vntill such tyme as the Lo[rd] takinge away the ministry of the Word from her, and the administracon of the Sacram[en]ts hath as it wer[e] by bill of divorcem[en]t disabled her.[3]

It was not only the administration of the Word and the sacraments but also the godly people within the Church of England that made the Church as a whole a true church. In other words, the godly leaven "leavened the whole lump [1 Cor 5:6]".[4] Cartwright argued that even "one truely faithfull" member in each parish church was enough to redeem all the churches as the churches of God, when he wrote:

> if that there be fewer faithfull in our churches then in others, the trueth of the church standeth not in the nomber, for if there were but in euery church one truely and vndissemblingly faithfull, al the rest holding the faith of our Lord Iesus christ in wordes onely, yet shoulde all those churches be vnto vs the

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1. Cartwrightiana, ed. Albert Peel & L.H. Carlson (1951), 54; CS, 47.
2. Cartwrightiana, 54f.
3. Ibid., 64f.
4. Lake, Moderate puritans and the Elizabethan church, 85f. Cf. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 276.

churches of God.[1]

In the same manner, the Jacobean puritans recognised the Church of England as a true church and its ministry as a true ministry. This was because, William Bradshaw explained,

> our Ministery in divers Congregations of the land at the least, Teach not onely many excellent points of doctrine. But so much doctrine as is sufficient to the Salvation of him that beleeueth the same; even all the maine fundamentall points of Salvation clearly set downe in Gods word.[2]

Clearly it was the ministry of preaching the Word, the saving doctrine, that made the Church of England and its ministry authentic.

In addition, the Jacobean puritans were convinced that there were many gathered churches based upon a voluntary principle within the Church of England, and these gathered churches made the whole Church a true church, just as the leaven "leavened the whole lump". It was for these godly's sake that Henry Jacob was averse to repudiating the public communion of the national church. On the contrary, the pastor of the gathered church at Southwark tried to combine membership of a gathered church with worship at his parish church.[3] As Professor Collinson observes, Jacob sought to reconcile the concept of the gathered church with communion with the Established Church.[4]

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1. Cartwrightiana, 51.

2. William Bradshaw, The Vnreasonablenesse of the separation (Dort, 1614), sigs. I3r-v.

3. Jacob distinguished "churches of England", which were true churches composed of the godly and with which he was prepared to communicate, from the Church of England, whose corruptions he tried to escape. See MWD, 24, 52. See also Jacob, A Confession and Protestation, art. 11.

4. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 380.

In Elizabethan and Jacobean England, the voluntarily gathered churches, according to Collinson, were well fixed within the framework of the loosely-arranged Established Church. Evidently there was no clear divide between these churches and the Church at large, and the members of them did not necessarily possess "a divisively sectarian spirit".[1] As one parson in Norfolk wrote to the Bishop of Norwich in 1609, asking his approval for a religious "exercise" at Swaffham: "Wee are noe waye encombred with buisie buddies to sowe the seedes of scisme emonge us to the unioynting of the peace of the ecclesiasticall boddie."[2] Here we see an interesting accommodation of a voluntary and autonomous movement to episcopacy, which meant that episcopacy was not necessarily to be abolished.[3] In reality, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans attempted positively to "decentralise" or "congregationalise" the Church of England under the form of episcopacy by planting congregationally-minded clergy in the parishes, rather than negatively unchurch it by gathering separated churches in opposition to the Church. Indeed, they also called for separation, as the Separatists did. "A Separation we deny not," retorted John Sprint, a Gloucestershire clergyman, in his controversy with the "rigid" Separatists at Amsterdam. "But the difference is, we suffer for separating in the church: you, out of the church."[4] Overall, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans sought to "learn a mean betwixt All

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1. GP, 538; Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 333f.

2. The Registrum Vagum of Anthony Harison, ed. T.F. Barton, I (Norfolk Record Society, 1963), 98f; quoted in GP, 538.

3. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 282.

4. Quoted in Ainsworth, Covnterpoyson, sig. A1r. See also Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 277f.

and Nothing", that is, between separation and non-separation.[1]

IV. The New England Congregationals' Moderate Approaches to the State and the Church of England

A. Their Moderate Approach to the Relationship between Church and State

Adhering to Calvin's church-state theory, the New England Congregationals practised both separation of church from state and cooperation of church with state in the Bible Commonwealth. Compared with the countries in Europe, where many high ecclesiastics filled the offices of state,[2] the Bay Colony in New England had achieved a high measure of separation of church and state. One typical example of this was that the ministers or the church office-holders were forbidden to hold civil office. But, on the other hand, the ministers could be frequently consulted by the magistrates. And they could expect the magistrates to guarantee sufficient maintenance, to ensure the

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1. William Ames, "To the Reader", in Bradshaw, The Vnreasonablenesse.

2. For example, in Catholic countries, Cardinal Richelieu (d.1642) acted as a de facto ruler of France, and the old prince-bishoprics of the Rhineland retained their sovereign status. In many Lutheran states, bishops continued to serve their respective princes in secular capacities. In England, bishops remained sitting in the House of Lords. Moreover, Archbishop Laud sat in the Commission for Treasury and the Committee of the Privy Council for Foreign Affairs (1635-40). Bishop Juxton of London was appointed Lord Treasurer and then Lord of the Admiralty (1636-41). In Scotland, Archbishop Spottiswoode of St Andrews was Lord Chancellor (1635-39). See Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (1988), 382ff.

security of the churches, and to suppress dissent.[1] The magistrates, being also visible saints like John Winthrop,[2] could act as "nursing father" to the church. As John Cotton declared:

> seeing Christian Magistrates being also Brethren and Members of Churches, are called to be Nursing Father unto the Church... it cannot but encourage them to take the more speciall notice and care of every Church, and to provide and assigne convenient allotment of land for the maintenance of each of them....[3]

This role, it must be added here, did not mean that magistrates could intervene at will in ecclesiastical affairs; there was a line they must not cross, the line between lawful intervention and unlawful usurpation.[4] In theory, the church-state relationship in the Colony was quite similar to that in the post-1639 Scotland: "As it is unlawfull for church-officers to meddle with the sword of the Magistrate, so it is u[n]lawfull for the Magistrate to meddle with the work proper to church officers."[5]

However the New England Congregationals held that those who were in authority must be respected. In the mid-1630s, they became aware that the principle of Congregational independence left the state as the only vehicle for keeping order. The Salem church covenant in 1636 stated: "carry our selves in all lawful obedience, to those that are over us, in Church and Commonweal." This caused the General Court to order in May 1636 that all future church gatherings should receive the

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1. F.J. Bremer, The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards (1977), 93f.

2. MWD, 125. For the godly magistrate, John Winthrop, see supra, 65.

3. WCCNE, 6.

4. Divid Hall, The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century (Williamsbury, 1972), 124.

5. The Cambridge Platform (1648), 17:5, in Williston Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism (Boston, 1960), 236.

approval of the magistrates.[1] Hence, in practice, it was the state in the Bay Colony, not the church, that dominated, because the state frequently intruded upon the internal affairs of the church.[2]

B. Their Moderate Approach to the Church of England

As mentioned before, the Separatists condemned the Church of England as a false church, because they thought that the "explicit" covenant in the Church of England was lacking.[3] In opposition to this view, New England divines developed a theory of "implicit" covenant, which acknowledged the churches composed of the godly within the Church of England to be true churches. Hence it was lawful to have fellowship internally (if not externally) with the Church of England, that is, fellowship with churches of England within the Church of England. Richard Mather in his Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discvssed defended the Church of England in four aspects.

In the first place, Mather reasoned, the covenant in the ancient English Church was still preserved in the present Church of England. The covenant history of the Church of England, as the Elizabethan martyrologist, John Foxe (d.1587), had recorded in his Acts & Monuments,[4] could be traced back to the very beginning of the English Church. When the gospel was brought into England by Joseph of

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1. Hall, The Faithful Shepherd, 125.

2. A.B. Seidman, "Church and State in the Early Years of the Massachusetts Bay Colony", New England Quarterly, XVIII (1945), 211-33.

3. Supra, 99n.

4. This work was also known as The Book of Martyrs. It had a great influence on the English mind, second only to that of the English Bible. See supra, 61f; infra, 212n, 228n.

Arimathea and then by Simon Zelotes in the 1st century, it was likely that churches planted by them were churches consisting of "right matter", the "Saints by calling", and knitted together by "right form", the "holy Covenant". Afterwards the English churches were "mixed with manifold corruptions". However the "footsteps" of the ancient covenant "are remaining in many places of the Land to this day", as were seen in these three questions and answers in baptism: "Dost thou renounce the Devill and all his works? I renounce them all. Dost thou believe in God the father, &c? I do believe. Dost thou promise to walk according to this faith &c? I do promise." This showed that "when men entred into the Church there ought to be a renouncing of sin, and believing on Christ, and an open professing of these things with a promise to walk accordingly."

Next, "though Popish Apostacy did afterwards for many ages overspread all Churches in England... yet we believe God still reserved a remnant," for whose sake, He preserved "the Holy Scriptures... and Baptisme in the name of the Trinity onely". When God stirred up the spirit of King Edward VI, and Queen Elizabeth "to cast off the Pope, and all fundamentall errors in Doctrine and Worship, and a great part of the Tyranny of Popish Church Government", the parish churches in England eventually received "the [Thirty-Nine] Articles of Religion", in which they acknowledged nothing but the Holy Scriptures, justification by faith, by free grace through Christ only -- all which contained the marrow of the Oracles of God upon which the Church is built. Mather then argued that where people did gather together into settled congregations "to heare and teach this Doctrine" on every Lord's Day, did "professe their subjection therunto", and did "binde themselves and their children... to continue therein", there were true

churches, "notwithstanding sundry defects and dangerous corruptions found in them". Mather claimed that his attitude toward the Church of England was the same as that of many other moderate puritan divines of note, such as William Whitaker, Master of St John's College in Cambridge, who had said that "nor can we judge or speake harshly of the Wombes that bare us, nor of the paps which gave us suck."

Thirdly, he continued, despite the increase of "grievous corruptions" that might force God to spit the "Lukewarme Laodicea" out of His mouth, there remained watchful brethren within the Church of England who would "beare faithfull witnesse against the corruptions... in respect of... Constitution, Worship, Discipline and Ministerie". It was these watchmen who hindered the iniquity from increasing and thus prevented the Church of England from being unchurched by God.

Finally, Mather accepted that in the Church of England there were "some parts of Gods true Worship", namely, "hearing the Word", which "we should willingly joine in". If it was lawful to hear the Word at "Mars-hill" in Athens, which was not a church (Acts 17), then "how much more might it bee lawfull to heare the word in many Parish assemblies in England... that are the true Churches of Jesus Christ," in which there were "many Soules that are sincere and upright hearted Christians...."[1]

To sum up, the Church of England, in Mather's opinion, was a true church, because it contained 1) the ancient English covenant that found expression in the candidate's profession of Faith with a promise to walk accordingly; 2) the preaching of the gospel and the profession of subjection to it; 3) the brethren with reforming zeal; and 4) the

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1. CGCC, 24-8.

community of the godly. In effect, Mather's argument was based on William Ames' implication that the covenant existed in the Church of England implicitly rather than explicitly.[1]

Seeing that separation from the Church of England could not be justified, John Davenport, on behalf of "the elders of the Churches" in those "remote Coasts of the earth", wrote back to their co-members of the Church of England in their "native Countrey" in 1639, expressing their opposition to the Separatists' "rigid separation":

> you know they separate from your Congregations, as no Churches; from the Ordinances dispensed by you, as meere Antichristian, and from your selves as no visible Christians. But we professe unfainedly, we separate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your Churches, and from such Ordinances administred therein as we feare are not of God, but of men; And for your selves, we are so farre from separating as from no visible Christians....[2]

V. The Congregationals' Moderate Approaches to the State and the Mainline Churches

A. Their Moderate Approach to the Relationship between Church and State

Contrary to the Separatist slogan, "reformation without tarying for anie", the statement in the Apologeticall Narration implied that reformation must be accomplished by both "Church and State", by both

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1. For Ames' treatment of "implicit" and "explicit" covenant, see his Marrow, I, 32:15. See also GP, 532; Miller, Orthodoxy, 87.

2. [John Davenport], An Answer of the Elders of the Severall chvrches in New-England unto Nine Positions (1643 [written in 1639]), "The Epistle". See also Miller, Orthodoxy, 156f.

"Assembly" and "Parliament".[1] In another tract, the dissenting brethren, together with some of the Presbyterian divines, declared "Christian Magistrates... to be authorizers of... such reformation", and urged London fanatics "to forbear... the joyning of themselves into Church-societies of any kind whatsoever" until they could see what form of church government the magistrates would sanction.[2] These showed that the dissenting brethren were "magisterial reformers".[3]

Being convinced of "the prudence of the State" and "the wisdome of this Parliament", the dissenting brethren stated that the magistrate, in his judicious judgement, should use his power to intervene in the ecclesiastical proceedings and jurisdiction of one church offended against and over another church offending. That is to say, the ecclesiastical authority must be checked and balanced by the civil authority, an authority to which the church must submit and to which the church must have recourse. Their statement reads as follows:

> And what further authority, or proceedings purely Ecclesiasticall, of one, or many sister Churches towards another whole Church, or Churches offending... can rationally be put in execution (without the Magistrates interposing a power of another nature, unto which we upon his particular cognisance, and examination of such causes, professe ever to submit, and also to be most vvilling to have recourse unto) for our parts vve savv not then, nor do yet see.

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1. AN, 26. According to Thomas Goodwin, there was a pattern for this in the Old Testament: Zerubbabel (the magistrate) cooperated with Jeshua (the minister) in building, finishing, and perfecting the Temple (the reformation of the church "from under Samaritan superstitions"). See ZE, 55.

2. Certaine Considerations, 2f. See also supra, 36.

3. By "magisterial reformers" I mean those who wished to achieve religious reform with the approval and active sponsorship of the state.

Furthermore, they affirmed that "without the Magistrates interposing their authority" and judging the ecclesiastical "cases", the ecclesiastical proceedings and jurisdiction would be "ineffectuall".[1] These words actually conveyed the Congregationals' willingness to make common cause with the parliamentary Erastians to stop the establishment of the Presbyterian government.

Believing in the nursing role of the magistrate, the dissenting brethren, in their Apologeticall Narration, displayed little antipathy to accepting set maintenance from the state.[2] This was true of their exile churches in Rotterdam and Arnhem. According to a document dated 26 November 1641, the church at Rotterdam was said to have received a proper subsidy from the city government for the maintenance of two ministers.[3] David Masson proves that Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, two pastors at Arnhem church, were given the use of one of the local churches and allowed public money from the government for their ministries.[4] This was also true of the Congregational church at Great Yarmouth, where William Bridge mentioned that he received "£100 a year

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1. AN, 28, 26, 17, 19.

2. AN, 7f. Actually they only mentioned the Dutch Reformed Church, from which they received set maintenance. See infra, 126. By the Dutch Reformed Church that allowed them maintenance they probably also meant the Dutch government, seeing that the former was the national church in Holland. See R.P. Stearns, The Strenuous Puritan: Hugh Peter 1598-1660 (Urbana, 1954), 53. By comparison, the Separatists received none of these, for they believed that government sponsorship meant government control. See DP, 368.

3. This document is in the Archive of the Synod of South Holland. See DP, 170, 171n.

4. David Masson, The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time, II (1859-94), 578f.

from the state" for his duties as a town preacher.[1] In this regard, Robert Baillie did not seem to understand the Congregationals fully when he said: "The ancient way of maintenance by Tythes or Lands, or set Stipends, they do refuse."[2] As it was, the Congregationals, while objecting to compulsory tithes, did not deprecate such set maintenance. Burton had put it clearly that, although the Congregational ministers did not "looke after any such wages... as Tithes, or the like", yet they were "content" with "such competent maintenance" being allowed to them "freely, without any compulsion (as is used in Tithes)".[3] That the Congregational incumbents during the Commonwealth acted as professional clergymen and were hence willing to accept benefices within the "Establishment", while at the same time upholding the concept of the gathered church, according to Michael Watts, "is evidence of the gulf that divided... the conservative Congregationalists [represented by Owen and Nye] from the radical Independents [notably Fifth Monarchists, Levellers, and Quakers]".[4]

What the dissenting brethren demonstrated above was to convince their Presbyterian brethren that their "Independency" so called was actually "accountable to the State they live in".[5] Indeed, even Charles Herle, who later succeeded Twisse as prolocutor of the

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1. John Browne, History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk (1877), 165n.

2. Diss., 117.

3. Burton, The Protestation Protested, sig. C3r.

4. MWD, 100; supra, 48. The question whether the ministers should enjoy the maintenance was so controversial in 1653 as not only to divide the conservatives from the radicals but also to bring about the downfall of the Barebones' Parliament. See MWD, 146-50.

5. AN, 14.

Westminster Assembly, also accepted that "Independency" was free "from the Incompatiblenesse with Magistracy".[1] But how close was this church-state relationship? The Congregationals not only rejected as too anabaptistical the Separatist view that the church should separate from the state, but also rejected as too papist the Presbyterian view that church and state were two separate bodies within one and the same Christian Commonwealth, and hence the church had power in its own right and its internal affairs should not be interfered with by the state.[2] To define their position, the dissenting brethren claimed that they gave more power to the magistrate than "the principles of the Presbyteriall government will suffer them to yeeld".[3] It appeared that the church-state relationship in the Congregational thought was much closer than that in the thought of the Presbyterians; for the former even allowed the magistrate to intervene in the internal affairs of the church, while the latter did not.

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1. AN, frontispiece.

2. For the Presbyterian view, see Steuart, Some Observations, 6, 42, 47ff, in which we see that the Presbyterians objected strongly to the magistrate's interference with the internal affairs of the church, which found expression in his "judging of controversies of Religion", his making "Ecclesiasticall Laws", his "Creation... and Deposition of Church-officers", his "Ecclesiasticall Censures", and his "Excommunicating" of others. See also Diss., 215. While refusing to grant "spirituall" power to the state, the Presbyterians were ready to grant it "an executive, coercive, and externall power; which is not in, but about... and for the Church." See Steuart, op. cit., 6.

3. AN, 19. For the details of their position, see Steuart, op. cit., 6, 49, in which the dissenting brethren were said to be willing to grant the magistrate not only external power but also internal power in regard of the church -- the power in "judging of controversies of Religion... in the Vocation [and] Depostion... of ministers, in Ecclesiasticall Censures, [and] in Excommunicating" of others. See also Francis Cheynell, The Rise, Growth and Danger of Socinianism (1643), 65: The dissenting brethren "say that Every Christian Magistrate is Head in the Church, which no Anabaptist will say."

However the dissenting brethren's inconsistency on church-state relationship was promptly pointed out by Thomas Edwards, the arch-opposer of the Congregational way:

> you give not so much to the Magistrates, as the Presbyterians. ... whereas the Presbyterians doe acknowledge the Protestant Prince and Magistrate, an eminent member of the Church, and in their greatest Assemblies... give him an eminent place and power,[1] you according to your principles doe not owne him for a member of the Church... unlesse you account him a visible Saint, &c. neither doe you give him so much power or vote....[2]
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> .....
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> ... The Presbyterians give a great deale of power to the supreme Christian Magistrate in the Reformation of Religion, and in repairing and building the house of God... but whether the Independents give as much... I question: There is a Tractate in my hands about a Church, that goes under the name of one of you, wherein Civill Magistrates are cut off... "the immediate Independent power from Christ is given to the Saints onely, to gather and combine themselves in such an Assembly without expecting warrant from any Governours whatsoever upon earth....[3]

Here the antapologist reminded the apologists of the fact that the Presbyterians gave the magistrate a great deal of power in furthering the reformation of the church,[4] no matter whether he was a visible saint or not, whereas the Congregationals gave power to none other but the visible saints.

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1. This is still partly true of the Kirk today. Whenever the General Assembly is convened, the High Commissioner of Her Majesty the Queen is invited and is given "an eminent place" in the Assembly, though not given power to vote. The biblical ground of this was given as early as 1642, when Rutherford wrote: "with us the King or his Commissioner is present, as in the Nationall Assembly of the Jews, was King David [1 Chr 13:1-2]... for the King beareth the Sword... and is there a... nursing Father [Is 49:23; Rom 13:4]." See Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea, 312.

2. As suggested by Steuart, the dissenting brethren would not give internal power to the magistrates unless "they become true Christians", namely, the visible saints. See Steuart, op. cit., 6.

3. Anta., 159f.

4. But John Goodwin accused Presbyterians of saying that the magistrate must do whatever the synod asked him to do. See John Goodwin, M.S. to A.S. with A Plea for Libertie of Conscience in a Church way, against the cavils of A.S (1644), 33.

Edwards' accusation might be fair, for it was reported in the document mentioned before that many of the ecclesial acts in Rotterdam church had been done "without any communication with classis, consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church, or magistrates".[1] Moreover, the Apologeticall Narration made no mention of the presence of the magistrate at the so-called "synod" held in Rotterdam.[2] It seemed that what the dissenting brethren said in theory was not always consistent with what they had actually done in practice. As Adam Steuart observed: "Neither beleeve I, that ye will grant unto it [the state], such an authority; or if ye grant it, I doubt, if ye will submit your selves unto it."[3] The dissenting brethren's inconsistency actually resulted from their paradoxical assertion that they could give the magistrate ecclesial power while at the same time upholding firmly the crown rights of Christ manifested in the rule of the saints. To assess this, we should, first of all, examine the ideas in their paradoxical assertion, and then decide what the Congregational position really was.

While agreeing with the Presbyterians in adhering to the views that the state must cooperate with the church in furthering the reformation, and that it had a duty to maintain true religion by providing maintenance and to defend it by suppressing heresies,[4] the Congregationals differed from the Presbyterians in holding that the state also had power to intervene in internal affairs of the church,

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1. Supra, 115n; quoted in DP, 170.
2. Infra, 189ff.
3. Steuart, op. cit., 6f.
4. Supra, 113-6, and infra, 266.

that ecclesiastical power must be checked and balanced by civil power, and that the church should have recourse to the state.[1] It was because of this that Baillie believed that Congregationals were in favour of an Erastian supervision.[2]

On the principle of the crown rights of Christ, the Congregationals emphasised that saints, and saints only, were the rulers of the church.[3] But how could this be reconciled with Erastianism? There is no doubt that the Congregationals could give the magistrate power over the external affairs of the church, no matter whether he was a saint or not. But they were, in practice, not so generous as to give the magistrate power over the internal affairs of the church, unless he was both a magistrate and a saint (a godly magistrate). Only by giving power over the internal affairs of the church to the godly magistrate could the crown rights of Christ be prevented from being violated. Herein lies the possible answer to the above-mentioned question.

In retrospect, the Presbyterians, although they forbade the magistrate's interference in the internal affairs of the church, gave the magistrate all power in its external affairs in both theory and practice. On the other hand, the Congregationals, while having no objection to the magistrate's participation in the external affairs of the church in both theory and practice, left room for the godly

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1. Steuart, op. cit., 49: "This power that ye [the dissenting brethren] grant to the Magistrate, is either Internall, or Externall, in regard of the Church: If Externall we [Presbyterians] grant it, as well as ye: If Internall, then he must be an Ecclesiasticall Person."

2. Diss., 215.

3. Supra, 118; infra, 230.

magistrate's intervention in the internal affairs thereof, although they had not found opportunity to put their theory into practice, as their New England counterparts had done. Seen in this light, there was no striking difference between the Presbyterian and Congregational practices in regard to the church-state relationship. The only difference was that the Presbyterians took over from Calvin and the Elizabethan puritans the view that the church should be spiritually independent of the state, whose power was limited to the outward execution of what the church had inwardly decided,[1] and then developed it into a kind of "clericalism"; whereas the Congregationals took from the Jacobean puritans the view that the state should supervise the church "civilly" (actually sometimes spiritually), and from the New Englanders the view that the church should obey the godly magistrate civilly (actually sometimes spiritually), and then developed them into a kind of "Erastianism", at least in theory: the godly magistrate had power to intervene in internal affairs of the church; the power of the minister must be checked and balanced by the power of the godly magistrate; the church should have recourse to the godly magistrate.

B. Their Moderate Approaches to the Church of England and the Reformed Churches

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren recalled how upset they were when they returned to England and were suspected of being "schismatics":

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1. Also the Presbyterians, like the Congregationals in both Old and New England, inherited from Calvin and the puritans the view: church and state should cooperate with each other in the reformation, and the state had a duty to maintain and defend the true religion and suppress heresies.

> When it pleased God to bring us his poor Exiles back again in these revolutions of the times... into our own land.... We found... (which was as great an affliction to us as our former troubles and banishment) our opinions and wayes... environed about with a cloud of mistakes and misapprehensions, and our persons with reproaches, Besides other calumnies, as of schisme, &c. (which yet must... relate to a differing from the former Ecclesiastical Government of this Church established, and then who is not involved in it as well as we?)[1]

"Schism", in the eyes of the "Presbyterians", meant "Brownism". The dissenting brethren were extremely offended when they were identified as "Brownists" or Separatists. To avoid being misunderstood as a "sect",[2] they disowned the name of "Brownism", even the name of "Independency", which had been pouring in against them with increasing frequency. They claimed that the term "Independency" was a misnomer, for their way had never been independent of the national church and the civil authority:

> That proud and insolent title of Independencie was affixed unto us, as our claime; the very sound of which conveys to all mens apprehensions the challenge of an exemption of all Churches from all subjection and dependance, or rather a trumpet of defiance against what ever Power, Spirituall or Civill; which we doe abhor and detest: Or else the odious name of Brownisme, together with all their opinions as they have stated and maintained them, must needs be owned by us: ... we differ much from them.[3]

Here they were at pains to dissociate themselves from the despised Brownists, who had, according to Baillie, refused "to wait for the countenance of any Authority, either Ecclesiastick, or Civill".[4]

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1. AN, 23.

2. In AN, 7, the dissenting brethren complained that they were placed on a par with "all those sects and all the assemblies of them".

3. AN, 23f. For the reason why they disowned the term "Independency", see supra, 48.

4. Diss., 23.

The dissenting brethren stated that they had already drawn lessons from the shipwrecks of Brownism, and that they had analysed the causes of the separation:

> We had likewise the fatall miscarriages and shipwracks of the Separation (whom ye call Brownists) as Land-marks to fore-warn us those rocks and shelves they ran upon; which also did put us upon an enquiry into the principles that might be the causes of their divisions.[1]

By saying this, they tried to convince the Presbyterians of their non-sectarianism.

Eager to free themselves from suspicions of sectarian undertaking, the dissenting brethren wrote a great deal about their cordial relationship with the mainline Protestant churches, trying to make it known that they were still in the mainstream of Christianity.

First of all, they professed that they had never "unworshipped" the true worship in the parish churches of England; nor had they "unministered" the true ministry in them:

> We have this sincere profession to make before God and all the world, that all that conscience of the defilements we conceived to cleave to the true worship of God in them, or of the unwarranted power in Church Governours exercised therein, did never work in any of us....

But, instead, they acknowledged "that multitude of the assemblies and parochiall congregations" of England to be "the true Churches and Body of Christ, and the Ministery thereof a true Ministery". "Much lesse," they continued, "did it ever enter into our hearts to judge them Antichristian." Even in those days, said they, when "the Churches of England were the most... overspread with defilements" and when they

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1. AN, 4f.

themselves had the least hope of visiting their own motherland again in peace and safety, they "did and would hold a communion with them [i.e., the churches of England] as the Churches of Christ".[1]

In the same manner, the dissenting brethren thought it horrible to unchurch the Reformed Churches simply because of their mixture of good and bad:

> we saw and cannot but see that by the same reason the Churches abroad in Scotland, Holland, &c. (though more reformed) yet for their mixture must be in like manner judged no Churches also, which to imagine or conceive, is and hath ever been an horrour to our thoughts.[2]

Now the question is: why did the dissenting brethren acknowledge both Church of England and Reformed Churches to be true churches? First, they held, as the puritans had done, that where there is the administration of the Word, there is a true church. As Thomas Goodwin wrote to the effect that, although hypocrites are received into a church, yet the church is not thereby unchurched; for the administration of the Word being true, such a church remains "an Ordinance of Divine Institution".[3] Secondly, they believed that the parish churches in England had "implicit" covenants. As reported by Alexander Forbes, "such Churches where there is either an explicite and implicite covenant betwixt the members and the Pastor, and betwixt the members among themselves, these they [i.e., the dissenting brethren] hold for true Churches."[4] (Here the influence of New England

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1. AN, 6.

2. AN, 6.

3. Goodwin, "On Ephesians", WTG, I, 8.

4. [Alexander Forbes], An Anatomy of Independency, or A Briefe Commentary, and Moderate Discourse upon The Apologeticall Narration (1644), 22.

Congregationals was noticeable.) Thirdly, they, like the puritans, were convinced that where there are saints, there are true churches. As they stated: "Churches made up of such [namely, 'the least of Christ' or 'the better part'] we were sure no Protestant could but approve of, (as touching the members of it) to be a true Church, with which communion might be held."[1]

Having made their "sincere profession", the dissenting brethren proceeded to give "a reall testimony" of how their exile churches had remained in brotherly communion with the churches of England and the Reformed churches in Holland.

In Holland, some of their brethren, they said, had their children "baptized" in those "Parishionall congregations",[2] and allowed the "godly" who visited them to receive "the communion of the Lords Supper" with them on the condition that "they held that relation, fellowship and comembership in their parish Churches in England," and professed "themselves to be members thereof". All these things, the dissenting brethren added, "many hundreds can witnesse, and some of our brethren in their printed books candidly to testify for us".[3]

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1. AN, 12.

2. Sidrach Simpson was said to have "baptized his children in Parishionall Congregations". See Anta., 52. By "Parishionall Congregations" were probably meant English parish churches in Holland, which had been formed by the English merchant adventurers, soldiers in garrison, and religious refugees, and were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, but financially supported by the Dutch government. See Stearns, Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands, 12f, 41-70. One of these "Parishionall Congregations" was founded in Rotterdam in 1635. They met at St Peter's, where they could exercise the Reformed religion according to the discipline and order of the Church of England. Their ministers were from England and appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. See DP, 167, 170.

3. AN, 6f. Here they referred to the testimony of Francis Cheynell, a Presbyterian, who had distinguished them from the Brownists on the

The dissenting brethren continued that, as they "alwayes held this respect" unto their own churches in England, so they "received and were entertained with" the same respect "from those reformed Churches abroad", among whom they "were cast to live". They told Parliament how their exile churches and the Dutch Reformed Church "both mutually gave and received the right hand of fellowship" on the principle of mutual acceptance.[1] For example, the Dutch Reformed Church lent them "their own Churches, or publique places for worship, to assemble in, where themselves met for the worship of God at differing houres the same day". And they were granted "the priviledge of ringing a publique Bell" to call to divine service.[2] And they were given a "full and liberall maintenance annually" for their "Ministers",[3] and "Wine" constantly for their "Communions". And they, on their part, "not onely held all brotherly correspondency with their

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ground that they were prepared to "communicate even in a Parish-assembly" where the ministers and people were in favour of further reformation. See Cheynell, op. cit., 66.

1. AN, 7.

2. Here the dissenting brethren added a non-restrictive attributive clause: "which we mention because it [i.e, the ringing of a bell] is amongst them made the great signall of difference between their own allowed Churches and other assemblies [sects], unto whom it is strictly... forbidden." See ibid. That is to say, they were recognised by the Dutch as belonging to the national church and hence had the privilege of ringing a bell. Baillie compared them with the Separatists: "they make no scruple to use the Churches builded in the time of Popery; nor of bells, though invented by a Pope and baptized with the popish superstitions;" while the Separatists eschewed these as irremediably tainted with "popish" idolatry. See Diss., 116f. For the Separatist view of the bell, see John Canne, A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England, (n.p., 1634), 112.

3. According to sectarian ideology, a regularly paid ministry was against the principle of voluntary contributions and free offerings as laid down in Heb 7:12, 1 Thes 5:12-3, and Rom 15:27. See Francis Johnson, An Answer to Maister H. Iacob his Defence of the Churches and Ministery of England (n.p., 1600), 160; The

[Dutch] Divines, but received also some of the members of their Churches... unto communion in the Sacraments and other ordinances, by virtue of their relation of membership retained in those Churches". Here all they tried to stress was that the Dutch ecclesiastical authorities gave "the right hand of fellowship" to none but those who were of the church-type. As the dissenting brethren stated, the Dutch Reformed Church "manifested" this "right hand of fellowship" only "by the very same characters... which are proper to their own Orthodoxe Churches, and whereby... to distinguish them from all those sects".[1] In effect, the dissenting brethren sought to deduce such a conclusion that they were not of the sect-type. Their syllogism could be presented thus:

1. Those who have fellowship with the Reformed Church are not a sect.
2. The Congregationals have fellowship with the Reformed Church.
3. Ergo: the Congregationals are not a sect.

It must be added, however, that sometimes the dissenting brethren's attitude toward the Church of England was not coherent. Thomas Edwards, who had examined the Apologeticall Narration thoroughly, exposed the illogicalities of the dissenting brethren's profession about the parish churches of England. He pointed out that what they professed in the Apologeticall Narration was shown to be contrary to what some of them in letters and other manuscripts had declared. For instance, William Bridge once wrote to his friends in Norwich that those who lived under the episcopal government, which was "Papall and Romish", did "worship the beast, and... receive his marke

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the Churches and Ministery of England (n.p., 1600), 160; The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-90, 358.

1. AN, 6ff.

[Rev 13:8; 14:9-10]". Sidrach Simpson wrote to a man in London that in the Church of England "Baptisme is no baptisme.... A Minister is no Minister."[1] These statements contrasted sharply with the statement in the Apologeticall Narration that "the assemblies and parochiall congregations" of England were "true churches", and "the Ministery thereof a true Ministery". In the last analysis, Edwards argued, the Congregationals were orthodox puritans in name, but heterodox Separatists in essence:

> As the Socinians say they hold Christ God, and call him so, but in a sense of their own, and yet denie it in the Orthodox sense: So Pelegians and Arminians will extoll the grace of God, and that a man can doe nothing without it, and yet... they set up free-will, above the grace of God: And so Antinomians will say, they doe not denie the law of God; and yet... are flat against it. And so the Papists will say, they hold and looke to be saved by Christ, as well as any Protestant (though it's well knowne there is a great difference betweene them, in the point of Justification:) So you... in a sense of your owne, give us good words, and say, we have true Churches and true Ministerie; and yet... you teach flat contrary.[2]

Despite their incoherence, we can summarise the dissenting brethren's basic position as this: narrowly speaking, only those churches "gathered" within the Church of England were true churches; broadly speaking, it was these gathered churches that redeemed the entire parochial congregations as true churches. In other words, it was because of those "whom we knew godly"[3] that the Church of England could be called a true church. As Jeremiah Burroughes explained later

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1. Quoted in Anta., 45f. Likewise, Forbes wrote: the dissenting brethren "all renounced their Ordination in England and ordained one another in Holland: When Master Ward was chosen Pastor, and Master Bridge Teacher at Rotterdam, first Master Bridge ordained Master Ward, and then immediately Master Ward again ordained Master Bridge." See [Forbes], An Anatomy of Independency, 23.

2. Anta., 50.

3. The dissenting brethren gave the right hand of fellowship only to those "whom we knew godly". See AN, 6; supra, 125.

on: "That we may call the Church in England a Nationall Church because of the many Saints in it who are of the body of Christ."[1] In addition, it was because of the covenant existing implicitly in the Church of England that made the Church the Church of Christ.[2] And it was because of the "implicit" call based on the "implicit" covenant that made the ministry thereof a true ministry.[3] Here the "church-ideal" was balanced by the "sect-ideal", and vice versa.

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1. Jeremiah Burroughes, A Vindication of Mr Bvrrovghes, against Mr Edwards his foule Aspersions, in his spreading Gangraena, and his angry Antapologia (1646), 23.

2. Thomas Goodwin wrote to his namesake John Goodwin and said: "We deny not, but the Covenant in many of the English Congregations is more implicite, and not so plaine as were to bee desired; yet there wants not that reall and substantiall comming together or agreeing in Covenant, and that substantiall profession of faith, which... hath preserved the essence of visible Churches in England unto this day." See "T.G to I.G." [1639], 36; quoted in Diss., 135f. Italics mine. Compare the idea of Thomas Goodwin with that of Richard Mather! See supra, 110-13.

3. Forbes remarked: "they acknowledge no man a true Minister by virtue of his Ordination in England; but all their acknowledgement of any true Ministry in England, is onely by virtue of an explicite or implicite Call, founded on that explicite or implicite Covenant with him." See Forbes, Anatomy, 23.

VI. Church Worship and Church Ministry

In their apologia, the dissenting brethren stressed that not only in doctrine they were as orthodox as their Presbyterian brethren,[1] but also in both worship and ministry, they differed little from them.[2] Now we proceed to discuss their church worship and church ministry.

A. Church Worship

In their "briefe generall account", the dissenting brethren claimed that their "publique worship was made up of no other parts then the worship of all other reformed Churches":

> publique and solemne prayers for Kings and all in authority, &c. the reading the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; Exposition of them as occasion was; and constant preaching of the word; the administration of the two Sacraments, Baptisme to infants, and the Lords Supper; singing of Psalmes; collections for the poor, &c. every Lords day.[3]

This Congregational order of worship can be summarised thus:

Opening prayer

Scripture reading

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1. AN, 28; infra, 254f. For all this, the church at Arnhem did have some doctrinal "deviations". For instance, Pastor Archer, denying the conventional concept of heaven and hell, preached that "the soules of Saints" do not after death go to the "highest heavens", but go to the "Paradise" -- "a middle place", which is "below the third or highest heavens" or "in the highest Region of the Ayre"; and that "the soules of the damned" do not go to the "the place of Execution", but to "a Prison" either "in a lower Region of the Ayre" or somewhere "in the Seas". See John Archer, The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth (n.p., 1641), 24ff, 37. This "fantastic" doctrine reminded the Presbyterians of the Anabaptist doctrine of "soul sleep"! In response to Archer, the Presbyterians later on articulated their orthodox belief that "the soules of the Righteous... are received into the highest Heavens.... And the souls of the wicked are cast into Hell." See The [Westminster] Confession of Faith (Amsterdam, 1649), art. 32.

2. AN, 30.

Exposition of Scripture

Prayer

Sermon

Prayer

Lord's Supper

Psalm singing

Offerings.[1]

This is seen to be very similar to what was outlined by Thomas Lechford in his Plain Dealing and by John Cotton in his The True Constitution and The Way of Churches of Christ in New England.[2] As Robert Baillie put it, "the ordering of the parts of their worship" was "after Mr Cottons invention" in New England.[3]

1. Prayer

The dissenting brethren stated that their worship began with the "publique and solemne prayers for Kings and all in authority". The phrase on which they laid emphasis seemed to show that they were not so sectarian as had been the Separatists who disapproved of praying for those who were "in authority" in their worship. In one way, the Congregational prayers for those who were in power reflected the church-ideal in New Testament teachings. As Henry Burton put it: "the

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3. AN, 8.

1. According to one document, "a prayer before sermon and after" was followed by Communion. See Tanner MS. 65, fol. 24; quoted in DP, 229.

2. Lechford, Plain Dealing, 16; John Cotton, The True Constitution of a particular visible Church (1642), 5f; WCCNE, 66-9.

3. Diss., 118.

Apostle exhorts his Christians to pray for Kings, and such as are in authority [1 Tim 2].... For Christs Kingdome being spirituall, is so farr from being any prejudice to Civil states."[1]

"Concerning the great ordinance of publique Prayer and the Lyturgie of the Church", said the dissenting brethren, "there is this great controversie upon it about the lawfulnesse of set formes prescribed." By this they meant one of the controversies of the day, which had started with 1637 when English puritan divines wrote to the New England "planters", inquiring of them about the lawfulness of a "stinted form of Prayers and set Liturgies". The answer of the "reverend brethren" in New England was:

> the Churches here do not use any stinted form of Prayers, and Set Liturgies... for Church officers [are asked] to edifie the Church by their own gifts, as well in praying as in preaching... [the] primitive... Churches... in their best times... yeeld not the least foot steps to shew us another safe way.... As for after times towards the end of the second and beginning of the third century, we know how farre the Churches were then degenerated... and it was then foretold, that the power of godlinesse would in after times be exchanged for empty forms....[2]

As a response to this, John Ball (d.1640), a "Presbyterian" minister, joined the debate by publishing his A Friendly Triall in 1640. The controversy did not cease until 1645 when Guilielmus Apollonius, a Dutch divine, published his Consideration of Certain Controversies (English version).

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1. Burton, The Protestation Protested, sig. C1v. Compare Congregationals' praying for the magistrate with some of the Separatists praying against the magistrate! See supra, 94f.

2. [Davenport], An Answer of the Elders of the Severall chvrches in New-England, 56. Italics mine. Cotton added later that not only the primitive "patterne of all the Churches", but "the second Commandment [as well] prohibiteth such prescript Liturgies." See WCCNE, 70f. For post-apostolic apostasies, puritans' primitivism, and the second commandment, see infra, 204f, 198, 209, 234ff, 238f.

New England Congregationals, who played an important part in the controversy, were found to be relatively moderate in view. Although they were reluctant to use "set forme of prayer", that is, "another mans penned prayer", yet they professed that "the Lords Prayer" and other "formes of prayer, or blessing, or baptising, or thanksgiving" either "set downe in Scripture" or "devised by the gift of Gods spirit in themselves", might be "lawfully used as prayers, due cautions being observed".[1] Their position was, to some extent, close to that of the Dutch Reformed Church, who acknowledged to be lawful all prescribed prayers except those with "superstition" and "idolatry".[2]

It was in the above context that the dissenting brethren declared so courageously that they "practiced (without condemning others [i.e., those who used the set prayers]) what all sides doe... practice also, that the publique Prayers... should be framed by the meditations and study of our own Ministers, out of their own gifts... as well as their Sermons use to be."[3] Clearly, with the dissenting brethren, a prayer

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1. John Cotton, A Modest and Clear Answer to Mr. Balls Discourse of set formes of Prayer (1642), 2, 20, 25, 38; [Davenport], op. cit., 59. Italics mine. The Presbyterians admitted that the New Englanders, while disliking another man's penned prayers, were far from deeming it "Idolatry". By comparison, the Separatists were accused of having condemned any type of set prayers, even the Lord's Prayer, as "idolatrous & superstitious". See Diss., 119, 148, 32; John Ball, A Friendly Triall of the Grounds Tending to Separation (Cambridge, 1640), 5-8. See also Johnson, Plea, 246-9; The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-90, 380ff; Ainsworth & Johnson, Apologie, 69; Morgan, Visible Saints, 28. With these radicals, "all stynted praiers and redd service is but babling in the Lorde's sight, and hath neither promise of blessing nor edification." See The Writings of John Greenwood 1587-90, 295.

2. Guilielmus Apollonius, A Consideration of Certain Controversies (1645), in Historical Memorials relating to the Independents, or Congregationalists: from their Rise to the Restoration of the Monarchy, ed. Benjamin Hanbury, II (1839-44), 425f.

3. AN, 12. Compare this statement with that of the New Englanders. See supra, 132f.

that was "framed" by a minister himself through his own study and meditation and out of his own gift, not penned by others, could be lawfully said.

In effect, the Separatists, the Congregationals in both Old and New England, and even the Presbyterians all advocated the primacy of the Holy Spirit's action in their worship,[1] although the stresses they respectively placed on the Spirit differed in degree.[2] On the dissenting brethren's emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, there will be more discussion below.[3]

2. Scripture reading and exposition of Scripture

The dissenting brethren indicated that Scripture reading and exposition of Scripture were part of their worship. By referring to the reading of Scripture, they probably tried to differentiate themselves from some of the Separatists, such as John Smyth, who vehemently objected to reading Scripture in worship, and in whose eyes to read Scripture in worship was to introduce dead formalism into the church and to impede the work of the Holy Spirit.[4] The dissenting

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1. John Ball had stated that "Prayer is not a work of nature but of grace. The principall author thereof is the holy Ghost." See Ball, A Friendly Triall, 1.

2. For Separatists, prayer is "a powring out of the hart before God, by making requests or giving of thancks according to the present need & occasio[n]; through the help & working of the Holy ghost. ... We find that al the holy men of God, vsed thus to pray in the spirit, without reading or saying by rote any number of words." See Ainsworth, Certayne Qvestions, 11. Cotton was as moderate as the Presbyterians, for he believed that extemporaneous prayer and some prescribed prayers were "alike the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to whom it belongeth as well to teach us what to pray, as how to pray [Rom 8:26]". See Cotton, The True Constitution, 5f.

3. Infra, 136f.

4. The Works of John Smyth, I, 282: "Bicause vppon the day of

brethren also stressed that, in their service, they read "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament". By showing respect for both Old and New Testaments, they, it seemed, sought to distinguish themselves from some of the sects who thought much of the New Testament and little of the Old.[1]

It was the common practice of the Congregationals in both Old and New England that Scripture reading must be followed by exposition of Scripture, the letter of Scripture must be followed by the sense of it.[2] For them, letter and sense belong together, just as body and soul belong together. Accordingly, in worship they did not preach the letter of Scripture, but preached the sense from the letter of it.[3] In New England, it was "either the Pastor or Teacher, [who] readeth a Chapter in the Bible, and expoundeth it, giving the sense, to cause the people to understand the reading according to Neh. 8.8."[4]

Pentecost & many yeeres after the churches of the new testament did vse no bookes in tyme of spiritual worship but prayed, prophesyed, & sang Psalmes meerely out of their harts [Acts 2:4; 10:44-6; 19:6; 1 Cor 14:15-7,26]." See also MWD, 43n; Morgan, op. cit., 28. John Smyth (d.1612) was ordained in 1594. Having become a Separatist in 1607, he led his congregation at Gainsborough to Amsterdam. He eventually became a Se-Baptist. See BDBR.

1. According to Edwards, it was the viewpoint of some of the sects "that the Scriptures of the old Testament do not concerne nor binde Christians now under the new Testament." See Edwards, Gangraena, I, 19.

2. This was also the practice of some of the Separatists, who rejected all "bare reading of the word" without being followed by the exposition of it. See Canne, A Necessitie of Separation, 44.

3. William Bridge, "Scripture Light the Most Sure Light" (n.d.), WWB, I, 449f.

4. WCCNE, 67. Cf. Lechford, Plain Dealing, 16.

3. Sermon

Unlike Separatists, the dissenting brethren were not of the opinion that a sermon must be preached ex tempore without being composed and framed beforehand.[1] On the contrary, they stated that "Sermons", like "the publique Prayers", "should be framed by the meditations and study of our own Ministers, out of their own gifts".[2] To stress the importance of preparing the sermon beforehand by "meditation" and "study", Thomas Goodwin wrote elsewhere:

> Whereas some Men are for Preaching only Extempore, and without Study, Paul bids Timothy Meditate, and Study.... Even in writing some scriptures, the Penmen, though guided infallibly by the Holy Ghost, yet used Study and Meditation and Art in contriving of them. ... Neither can they [Paul and Timothy] be said to Preach Extempore, or what is at that present Revealed; for they Preach those things which their thoughts and speeches have been exercised in before. So as ordinarily the Extemporariness is in respect of memory.... The Holy Ghost may be supposed to bring to remembrance things before considered in Study and Meditation, or reading....[3]

But this, however, did not prevent the dissenting brethren from laying stress on the "gifts" of the Spirit. "By gift," in the definition of the New England divine, Thomas Hooker, "must... be meant, those spirituall and gracious abilities, which Timothy received by the

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1. For the Separatist objection to preaching a "framed" sermon, see Diss., 48, in which Henry Barrow was said to have taunted a preacher who could only "speak of what he list" in "his priviledged Tub [the pulpit]". The Separatists based their argument largely on Luke 21:14: "Meditate not aforehand what to say." For the criticism of this argument, see Goodwin, "Of the Constitution of the Churches of Christ" (1645), WTG, IV, 321.

2. AN, 12.

3. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 320f. In practice, the dissenting brethren saw nothing wrong in a minister preaching with notes. For instance, Nye was reported to have preached "much out of his paper book" at the Greyfriars kirk, Edinburgh, on 20 August 1643. See LJ, II, 97. In his "foreword" to 13 sermons at Stepney in 1648, Bridge said that he had preached with notes. See WWB, II, 2.

Spirit [2 Tim 1:6]... and by which he was fitted and furnished to that extraodinary work of an Evangelist."[1] A gift or an extraordinary quality was also what charisma referred to. Such a gift was not accessible to everybody. For the dissenting brethren, preaching ministry was also an ex dono ministry (a ministry "out of one's own gifts"), rather than an ex officio one. That is to say, it should be a charismatic undertaking. The inward call by the Spirit was more important than the outward call by man. This view was shared by most of the radicals.[2]

It must be noted here that the dissenting brethren's view on preaching was, to a certain degree, influenced by Cotton, who had stated that "If every Minister be to edifie the Church by the dispensation of his own... gifts... in preaching: Then he may not... preach another mans penned Sermon [that is, read a homily]."[3] What Cotton actually suggested here was that the minister should preach his own sermon, a sermon "framed" through his own meditation and study of the Bible and out of his own gifts.

According to sectarian mentality, preaching was exclusively spiritual event without any intellectual preparation. With this mentality, some of the Separatists showed contempt for the "universities of Oxford and Cambridg", and counted "vayne" and "ungodly" all "schole learning", such as "Latine or Greeke", "divinitye", "artes, philosophie, rethoricke and logique"; all school "degrees", such as "Bachelour and Master of Arte", and "Doctors of

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1. Thomas Hooker, A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline (1648), 55.

2. Nuttall, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience, 78f.

3. Cotton, A Modest and Clear Answer, 21. See also supra, 132f.

Divinity"; and all school offices, such as "a deane [of faculty], a fellowe of a colledge", and so on.[1] Did the dissenting brethren who endorsed ex dono ministry also decry learning? The answer should be in the negative. For, as we have seen, the dissenting brethren did assert that a minister should preach a "framed" sermon, which suggested that they were not hostile to the use of intellect for preaching. In addition, William Bridge stated:

> though I do not preach up the excellency of human learning in the church of God; yet... I may call upon you... not to despise the same, but to bless God for it. ... But [for] the help of human learning, Scripture... could not have been brought forth into English; and will ye then despise human learning...? Oh, ye wanton hearts, remember how the poor martyrs in Queen Mary's time, did bless God for the English translation; and how could that be without human learning?[2]

It is evident that the dissenting brethren did not decry "Athens" as such, as the Separatists or sectaries had done.[3] The fact is that they followed the puritans in deeming it necessary for a minister to use

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1. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-90, 343ff, 349, 351, 536; The Writings of Henry Barrow 1590-1, 212, 217, 219.

2. Bridge, "Scripture Light", WWB, I, 448. Here I made some alterations of the word order for clarity's sake.

3. For the sectaries' hostility to human learning, see Taylor, A Svvarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiqves, 8ff, in which the water-poet satirised "the cobbler" Samuel How's sermon on The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching, without Humane Learning, delivered in January 1638/9 in the Nag's Head tavern in Coleman Street: "The Cobler (How) his preachment strait began/ Extemp'ry without any meditation,/ But onely by the Spirit revelation/ ..../ And wisdome much unfitting for a Preacher,/ Because the Spirit is the onely teacher,/ For Christ chose not the Rabines of the Jewes,/ No Doctors, Scribes, or Pharisees did chuze:/ The poore unlearned simple Fisherman,/ The poling, strict tole-gathering Publican,/ ..../ And God still being God (as he was then)/ Still gives his Spirit to unlearned men,/ Such as are Barbers, Mealmen, Brewers, Bakers,/ ..../ Coopers, and Coblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers,/ And Chimney-Sweepers, by whose good endeavors/ The flocke may fructifie, encrease, and breed/ ...."

his learning while he was preparing his sermon.[1]

4. Sacraments

As mentioned above, sect-type Christianity usually deemphasises the objective means of grace -- the sacraments. Hence some of the Separatists preferred the term "seale of the covenant" to the word "sacrament", which was, in their eyes, a "traditional word" that "engendreth strife rather than godly edifying".[2] By contrast, the dissenting brethren were willing to use the word "Sacraments". They probably tried to indicate that they were of the church-type. They affirmed that they administered two sacraments: "Baptisme to infants, and the Lords Supper".

a. Infant baptism

They professed that they practised infant baptism, which implied that they were not like Baptists or Anabaptists who radically practised "believers' baptism". "Baptisme to infants", historically,

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1. John Morgan has argued that the puritans were not anti-intellectualists, though stopped short of rationalism. For example, Perkins stressed that a "Minister... must priuately vse at his libertie the artes, philosophy", grammar, logic, rhetoric, "diuinitie", "Latine", "Greeke and Hebrew", "whilest he is in [preparing or] framing his sermon". But, nevertheless, he was equally adamant that the minister "ought in publike to conceale all these [Humane wisedome] from the people, and no[t] to make the least ostentation". See The Workes of W. Perkins, II, 736f, 739, 744, 749 [italics mine]; John Morgan, Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560-1640 (Cambridge, 1986), 134f. J.F.H. New has also admitted that the puritans "did not scorn knowledge as such, or even regard it as irrelevant to God, but it was wholly irrelevant to salvation, and any glorying in it was a cardinal sin." See New, Anglican and Puritan, 26

2. The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587-90, 444f. Cf. Dexter, The Congregationalism, 271.

has always been associated with Augustinian doctrine of original sin. In this sense, the Congregationals, even the majority of the Separatists, were not radical enough.[1] As Troeltsch remarks: "Congregationalism was closely akin to the Calvinistic church-type. It is shown... in the Infant Baptism."[2]

b. The Lord's Supper

The Congregationals were actually more sacramental than the Presbyterians and their New England counterparts. While the Presbyterians administered the Lord's Supper once a quarter,[3] the New Englanders, once a month, the Congregationals in England celebrated it once every Lord's Day.[4] But their way of celebrating it was similar to the New Englanders', though a little different from the Presbyterians'. During the Supper, the minister and deacons administered at the Table in a sitting posture, while the congregation were sitting in their pews.[5] The minister prayed, blessed, and consecrated the elements apart: the bread first and the wine second.

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1. In vindication of infant baptism, John Robinson argued: "the infants of the faithful are within the compass of the new covenant.... And since all children... are conceived, and born in sin, and by nature, the children of wrath, Psa, li.5; Eph. ii.2; if these... children so dying shall be saved by Christ, then must they have a part... in this new covenant." See The Works of John Robinson, III, 201.

2. Troeltsch, The Social Teaching, II, 664.

3. Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans, 213.

4. Lechford, Plain Dealing, 16; Diss., 121; DP, 229.

5. Here by sitting in the pews was also meant sitting about the Table. In this respect, the Congregationals were not so radical as the Presbyterians who attempted to repeat the circumstances of the Last Supper (Mt 26:20) by practising sitting at the Table. See Davies, op. cit., 137, 214.

He delivered the bread on each plate to the deacons. Then the deacons carried it to the congregation. The plate went from one to another until all had eaten; in the same manner, the cup went from one to another until all had drunk. After all had received the bread and wine, the minister prayed.[1]

5. Singing of Psalms

Before the first half of the 18th century when the prejudice against hymns of "human composition" gradually broke down through the influence of the Congregational hymn writer, Issac Watts (d.1748), Psalm-singing was the only acceptable practice in worship within the Reformed circles.[2] Reformed leaders like Calvin and Zwingli rejected the practice of singing unscriptural hymns in church worship and used the metrical Psalter as the only pattern of congregational singing. The Psalms must be rendered as literally as possible, except for some exigencies of rhyme and metre.[3] This Reformed tradition was exactly adhered to by the New England Congregationals, who "endeavoured a new translation of the Psalms into English metre, as near the original as we could".[4]

The dissenting brethren asserted that they, following the Reformed tradition, practised the "singing of Psalms". Seeing there were similarities in many aspects between the two practices on both sides of the Atlantic, it can perhaps be assumed that the

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1. Ibid., 207-10. See also WCCNE, 68f.
2. R.T. Jones, Congregationalism in England 1662-1962 (1962), 128.
3. Chadwick, The Reformation, 78, 91.
4. WCCNE, 67.

Congregationals sang Psalms metrically as their New England counterparts and the Presbyterians did. They might not be so radical as the Separatists, to whom the singing of Psalms in rhythm, that is, not in the original, but a paraphrase, was unlawful.[1]

6. Offerings

There was "Collections for the poor every Lords day", wrote the dissenting brethren. While the Separatists deemed "collection" for "all poor people without respect of their religion" to be a "civil" alm, appointed by "the Magistrate", rather than "an ecclesiastical collection by their Deacons",[2] the Congregationals considered it a part of the divine service. On this they agreed fully with John Paget (d.1640), minister of the English Presbyterian church at Amsterdam, who had argued:

> As those prayers... publiquely made by the Church... for such as are no members of the Church are to be accounted an Ecclesiasticall service... so the almes collected... in a solemne assembly on the Lords day... are to be esteemed... a Church-service....[3]

Overall, the form of service the English Congregationals used "differed very little" from the form of service subsequently prescribed by the Presbyterians in the Directory for the Publique vvorship.[4] For all the dissenting brethren's claim that they

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1. The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow 1591-1593, ed. L.H. Carlson (1970), 119.

2. Quoted in John Paget, An Arrovv Against the Separation of the Brownists (Amsterdam, n.d.), 308.

3. Ibid., 313f. For John Paget, see DNB.

4. Cross, Church and People, 209. Cf. A Directory for the Publique vvorship of God (1644), 12-56.

"practiced... what all sides doe... practice also", and for all their denial of having made any innovation, some of their church practices in Holland seemed to be contrary to their apology. Edwards listed several innovations at Arnhem church: "your publicke worship was made up of other parts... [lay] Prophesying and Hymnes, and Annointing [church members] with oyle, and the Kisse of love."[1] By mentioning these, he tried to prove that the Congregationals were nothing but a sect; for lay prophesyings, hymn-singing and so forth had never been practised in the Reformed Churches but encouraged in the Separatist churches.

B. Church Ministry

With regard to "Officers and publique Rulers in the Church", the dissenting brethren affirmed that in Holland they "set up no other but the very same which the reformed Churches judge necessary and sufficient... that is, Pastors, Teachers, Ruling Elders... and Deacons".[2] Here they stated that they agreed with the Church of Scotland and the Reformed Church in Holland in adhering to the strictly Calvinistic fourfold ministry of the church. Besides, they maintained that this fourfold ministry was agreeable to that of the puritans or nonconformists. As they said: "the full strength... of our

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1. Anta., 60f.

2. AN, 8. "Pastors", "teachers" ("doctors"), "elders", and "deacons" were four ministries in the Reformed Churches. Of these, the most important ministries were pastors and doctors, to whom were entrusted the preaching and teaching of the doctrine. Sometimes pastors and teachers were equal. Elders and deacons were "lay" ministries. Both of them were elected by the people. The elders were asked to exercise the discipline. Sometimes the elders were at the same time pastors. The deacons were required to care for the poor. See Francois Wendel, Calvin: Origins and Development of his Religious Thought, tran. Philip Mairet (Glasgow, 1980), 303ff.

Non-conformists wrytings... [was] spent... in maintayning those severall Officers in Churches which Christ hath instituted in stead thereof (in which we fully agree with them)."[1]

But, nevertheless, the Congregationals dissented from Calvin and the Presbyterians on the nature of "Ruling Elders".[2] While the Presbyterians asserted that ruling elders were laymen, who "do maintain themselves upon their own means and attend their own particular Callings, which is not incompatible with their Office",[3] the dissenting brethren insisted that they were "not lay but Ecclesiastique persons", who were not engaged in secular pursuits.[4] The question of ruling elders, as we have seen, brought about a heated debate at an early stage of the Westminster Assembly. In fact, on this the Congregationals held the same view as had done the puritans, such as Cartwright, who stated that "although they were not pastors to preach the Word, yet were they no laymen, as they term them, but ecclesiastical persons."[5] The reason why ruling elders were "no more lay men", explained Cotton, was that they were "ordained to the Office by the election of the people, and imposition of hands".[6] A similar reason was given by the dissenting brethren, who argued that ruling

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1. AN, 15.

2. The ruling elders in the Scottish Kirk were actually the counterparts of churchwardens in the Church of England; although the latter were not asked to exercise ecclesial discipline.

3. [Alexander Henderson], Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, Cleared from some mistakes and prejudices (Edinburgh, 1644), 9f.

4. AN, 8. See also supra, 30.

5. Quoted in D.J. McGinn, The Admonition Controversy (New Brunswick, 1949), 493.

6. WCCNE, 14.

elders were clergy because they were "separated to that service".[1] Although the ruling elders in Congregational churches were "Ecclesiastique persons", they were not so important as those in Presbyterian churches. For the Presbyterians held the office of ruling elder to be jure divino, while the Congregationals did not.[2]

Their church discipline (church discipline in its narrow sense), the dissenting brethren asserted, also agreed with the general practice in the Reformed Churches, "namely, Admonition, and Excommunication upon obstinacie and impenitencie".[3]

But the Presbyterians lost no time in discerning untruths at certain points in the dissenting brethren's apology. Edwards, in particular, retorted: pastors were "necessary" and "perpetuall" officers in Congregational churches, yet the church at Arnhem "hath been many yeares without a Pastour".[4] It is true that, during the early 1640s, the steady emigration of ministers left the Arnhem church in a depressing state, as one historian wrote: "The Arnhem people lived for many years without a pastor."[5] However we must be clearly aware that, for the Congregationals, it is the church newly gathered and erected that creates the minister; therefore the church is prior

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1. AN, 8. But Edwards wondered whether all Congregational merchants who were made ruling elders had given up their trading careers to hold this office! See Anta., 63.

2. Supra, 30.

3. AN, 8f. Cf. supra, 40n.

4. Anta., 61.

5. Georgius Hornius, Historia Ecclesiastica et Politica (Leiden, 1665), 274; quoted in DP, 231.

to the ministry, which is the bene esse, but not the esse, of the church. This actually denied what later John Henry Newman asserted: "A sacerdotal order is historically the essence of the Church."[1]

Conclusion

Despite the fact that they shared with the Separatists the same concept of a voluntarily formed and covenantedly gathered church, wherein all members were saints, who alone were entitled by Christ to rule the church, the dissenting brethren, in their Apologeticall Narration, made every effort to dissociate themselves from the Separatists, whose attitudes toward the state and the mainline churches had been, by and large, militant. These apologists expected strongly that they would be considered as endorsing the role of the state, having a fraternal relationship with both the Church of England and the Reformed Churches, and having no deviation from the Reformed tradition in both worship and ministry.

Although they were not in favour of the concept of a national church, the apologists objected to the radical separation of church and state incoherently asserted by the Separatists, and affirmed that their gathered churches could be compatible with the state system. To our surprise, they alleged that they thought more of the ecclesial vocation of the magistrate than the Presbyterians did, because they would allow the magistrate to interfere even with the internal affairs of the church while the latter would not. But, on the other hand, the Congregational principle of the crown rights of Christ seemed to make this impossible, unless the magistrate was also a saint.

The Separatist advocacy of a radical separation out of the Church was also deplored by the Congregationals, who stood only for separation of the precious from the vile within the Church. The Congregational objection to separation out of the Church was based on the assumptions that the Church of England had the ministry of the Word, the churches composed of the saints, and the implicit covenant, which were enough to validate the Church as a true church. But sometimes the Congregationals did speak ill of the Church of England in a sectarian manner.

Overall, the Congregational way, as the apologists themselves put it, was far from being independent of "either Christian [or godly] Magistrate above them, or neighbour Churches about them".[2]

The dissenting brethren also stressed that, in both worship and ministry, they differed little from the Reformed Churches. However they did sometimes have some "innovations" in their worship, such as

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1. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Early Congregational Conception of the Church", TCHS, XIV (1940-44), 199; VS, 85.

2. AN, 21.

hymn-singing, lay prophesying, and so forth. It is equally true that sometimes they thought not so much of clerks in holy orders as of laymen in their ministry.

It is not to be denied that the Congregationals, at least in theory, inherited from the Elizabethan puritans the view that the church should cooperate with the state; from the Jacobean puritans the view that the state could supervise the church civilly (or spiritually to some extent); and from both Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans the view that the Church of England was validated as a true church by both ministry of the Word and godly people within it. Nor is it to be denied that they were influenced by the New Englanders in these aspects: the lawful obedience of the church to the state, the godly magistrate, the "implicit" covenant, and church worship.

In the Apologeticall Narration, we find that the Congregational position was somewhere between the mainline Protestants, who built their church on continuity with the past, and the Separatists, who attempted to go back directly to the New Testament church by making a radical break with the past history of the church. As the dissenting brethren themselves stated: "And wee did then, and doe here publiquely professe, we beleeve the truth to lye and consist in a middle way betwixt... Brownisme [sect-type] and... Presbyteriall Government [church-type]."[1]

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1. AN, 24.

CHAPTER THREE

"A COMBINED PRESBYTERIE" OR "A PARTICULAR CONGREGATION"?

Corresponding to the first chapter, in which we dealt with the dissenting brethren's preference for "the better part" and "faithful" (the "matter" of the church), this chapter is to discuss their insistence on "congregationall governement"[1] (the "form" of the church). As mentioned in the first chapter, the Congregationals, such as Henry Burton, firmly believed that it was the church "extrinsical" (territorialism) that caused a huge number of "profane persons" to flock into the church and thus made the church "a confused lump". Hence the only way to keep the church from impurity, for the Congregationals, was to make it "intrinsical"[2] or what Jeremiah Burroughes called "a garden inclosed" (Song 4:12).[3] That is to say, the Church of Christ must be congregationally formed. Obviously it was the emphasis on church purity that restrained the thought of the church as a hierarchical and territorial institution and produced

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1. AN, 15.

2. Supra, 53.

3. This "garden inclosed" (God's "spouse"), Burroughes wrote, was "the place of Gods delight... where very precious fruits doe grow," and "the dew of Hermon... descendeth." To secure her from the wilderness of the world surrounding her, God hedged, paled and walled her about. See Jeremiah Burroughes, An Exposition of the Prophesie of Hosea, I (1643), 263.

instead the thought of it as the local autonomous and disciplined congregation.[1] On balance, "congregationall governement" was the logical conclusion of the idea of "the better part" and "faithful".

In this chapter, we propose to discuss three main questions: I. What Is Meant by the "Church" (Mt 18:17)? II. How Does the Local Church Exercise the Keys? III. What Is the Relationship between Synod and Local Church? Each of these will be dealt with under three heads: A. The Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans' View; B. The New England Congregationals' View;[2] C. The Congregationals' View and Their Debate with the Presbyterians.

I. What Is Meant by the "Church" (Mt 18:17)?

The most controversial question between Congregationals and Presbyterians in the early 1640s was: what is meant by the "church", to whom Christ entrusted the keys of binding and loosing (Mt 18:17-18;

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1. Thomas Hooker, who distinguished the "public" communion (a hierarchical and territorial national church) from the "private" one (a local autonomous and voluntarily gathered church), argued that, in the public communion, if the synodal elite failed to excommunicate the wicked, the godly in the parish church could do no more than lament: "I can keep a man out of my house, but I cannot fling him out of the open congregation: that belongs only to those that are in... authority." None the less, in the private communion, Hooker continued, the whole congregation were able to exclude the wicked from their communion in their own right. See Thomas Hooker, The Carnal Hypocrite (c.1626); quoted in Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, 277f.

2. We arranged these two sub-sections as a response to what the dissenting brethren listed in the Apologeticall Narration as two of the sources of their "congregationall governement", i.e., the writings of "the good old Non-conformists" (the puritans) and the New England Congregational "wayes and practices". See AN, 4f.

16:19)?[1] There had been four opinions concerning the "church", the key-bearer. The first of them interpreted the "church" to refer to the pope only. (In other words, the pope is the "epitome" of the church.) The second took it to mean the diocesan bishop or prelate. The third held the "church" to be the presbytery of ministers and elders. The fourth understood the "church" to be the local congregation.[2] It was the last two that vexed the Westminster Assembly divines. Dissenting from the Presbyterian divines who viewed the church as a presbytery, the Congregational divines insisted that it signified a particular congregation. Before discussing the Congregationals' view of Matthew 18:17 and 16:19 and their debate about this with their adversaries, we should look at how the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans and the contemporary New England Congregationals thought of the texts.

A. The Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans' View

According to Dr Brachlow's recent research, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' understanding of Matthew 18:17 and 16:19 was quite ambiguous. The Elizabethan puritans, holding the church to mean a synod, did paradoxically indicate that it could be a particular

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1. By "the keys" was actually meant "ecclesiastical jurisdiction", which was concerned, according to Baillie, with "the admission of Members into a Church; their casting out againe by Excommunication, their reconciliation after repentance, the Ordination of Officers, their deposition from their charge, the Determining of Questions, the deciding of Controversies and such other acts of Ecclesiastick authority." See Diss., 181.

2. Cf. MS. Eng. th. e. 158, fols. 91-96, 121-4, 130-4, 137; CGCC, 45f; WCCNE, 96f; Lechford, Plain Dealing, "To the Reader"; Ball, A Friendly Triall, 238; The Works of John Robinson, II, 180.

congregation; while the Jacobean puritans, believing the church to be a particular congregation, did occasionally agree that it could be a synod.[1]

On several occasions, the Elizabethan puritans interpreted Matthew 18:17, and even 16:19, congregationally. While "restrayning math. 16 to the Ministers [of the synod]", Thomas Cartwright "exte[n]deth math. 18 to al Christian[s] [the whole congregation]", seeing that the "word church, is a noun collectiue".[2] Dudley Fenner's "congregational" interpretation of Matthew 18:17 might be more typical. He wrote: "If our Sauiour Christ [in] Math. 18. when hee sayth tell the Churche, meane not one Bishop... neither can it be meant [to be the Church] of manye Churches... but do meane... a particular Congregation."[3] Besides, William Fulke (d.1589), Fellow of St John's College in Cambridge, and William Whitaker, Master of St John's College, suggested that the church referred to a particular congregation while arguing that the keys of the kingdom of heaven as mentioned in Matthew 16:19 were given in Peter to "the whole Church", rather than to one person only.[4]

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1. Brachlow, "The Elizabethan Roots", JEH, XXXVI, 246; CS, 167, 170ff, 206, 211. As it was, the Separatists, such as Johnson and Robinson, took a similar ambiguous position. See CS, 180, 227.

2. Cartwright, The rest of the second replie, 83. See also The Works of John Whitgift, III, 501.

3. Dudley Fenner, A Covnter-poyson (n.d.), 117. Italics mine. Dudley Fenner (d.1587) became a curate in 1583, and was suspended for refusing to subscribe Whitgift's three articles the year following. See DNB.

4. Cited in CGCC, 45. See also infra, 175n. In puritan terminology, "the whole Church" is actually what the dissenting brethren called "one entire congregation" or "one particular congregation". See AN, 13. The term connoted the idea that a particular congregation is sui generis.

As regards the size of the particular congregation, the suggestion of the Elizabethan puritans was that the church assembled as "a smal flock" in one locality. This was based on their conviction that in the New Testament "the Apostles, disciples and all continued togeather [sic] in one place." Only in such a gathered community, they affirmed, could every member fully participate in the affairs of the community.[1] The suggestion that "a smal flock" assembled in one locality involved the belief that the church visible was not one, but several.

Despite their occasional interpretation of the church as a synod,[2] the Jacobean puritans, such as Henry Jacob and William Ames whom Perry Miller calls "Non-separating Congregationalists", were after all more congregational-minded than their Elizabethan forerunners in their understanding of the church. Jacob argued that under the Old Testament the visible church had been "a Catholike or vniversall Church", whereas under the New Testament the visible church was "a particular ordinary Congregation only".[3] In like manner, Ames thought of the visible church as neither a national and provincial, nor diocesan institution, but a particular assembly.[4]

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1. William Fulke, A Sermon preached at Hampton Court (1570), sig. G4r; Laurence Chaderton, A fruitfull Sermon (1584), 43; CS, 203. Italics mine.

2. For instance, Paul Baynes asserted that "by the name of Church" was meant "a representative Church", not "all the congregation". See Paul Baynes, The Diocesans Tryall (n.p., 1621), 77, 80. See also Ames, Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof, IV, 88f.

3. Henry Jacob, A plaine and cleere Exposition of the Second Commandement (n.p., 1610), sig. D7r; CS, 220.

4. CS, 210; Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, I, 32:3.

The particular congregation, as Henry Jacob saw it, should be formed on a small scale so that the members thereof could gather together in one place.[1] This view was shared by Ames, who said that "the members whereof are combined among themselves, and doe ordinarily meete into one place to the publick exercise of religion."[2] Again, the notion that a church should meet locally suggested that the visible church was not one, but numerous.

B. The New England Congregationals' View

Without the Elizabethan puritans' ambiguous interpretation of the word "church", John Cotton put it clearly that the church denoted neither bishop nor presbytery, but a particular congregation of faithful believers. In his treatise, he wrote thus:

> [in] Matth. 18.17... [our Saviour] directeth a Brother offended, for the healing of the spirit of an offender, finally to referre the matter to the Church. Tell (saith he) the Church. Now we cannot finde throughout the new Testament, that ever the word Church is taken any otherwise than for the Society and Congregation of the faithfull... never for one Bishop... or Archdeacon.... Neither is the word Church taken throughout the new Testament for an Assembly of Presbyters: the Consistory is a word unheard of there.[3]

As indicated previously, the word "church" could be looked upon as the key-bearer; therefore the particular congregation that the word "church" denoted was the key-bearer. To vindicate this, Cotton stressed that in Matthew 16:16-19 it was on behalf of neither apostle [bishop] nor elder but all professed believers that Peter had received the keys:

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1. CS, 220; Henry Jacob, Reasons Taken ovt of Gods Word and the Best Hvmane Testimonies (n.p., 1604), 65f.

2. Ames, Marrow, I, 39:22; CS, 210. Italics mine.

3. WCCNE, 96f.

> the power of the Keys is given to the Church, to Peter, not as an Apostle, nor as an Elder, but as a profest believer; in the name of believers, and upon occasion of the profession of his faith, Mat.16.16 to 19. whereupon the binding and loosing (which is the power of the Keys) is attributed to the whole Church, Mat.18.17, 18.[1]

Here Cotton seemed to advocate the rule of the believers. Besides, Richard Mather justified this supposed rule of the demos by such an argument:

> The members of the Church are seene by John in a vision sitting on thrones, cloathed with white rayment, having on their heads Crownes of Gold, vers. 14. Now Thrones and Crownes are ensignes of authority and power, to note unto us that authority and governing power, which is committed by Christ unto the Church.[2]

No wonder Thomas Lechford complained that in New England church members were all "Rulers" and "Bishops".[3]

In vindication of their conviction that the visible church was not universal but particular, Cotton contended that it was clearly written in I Corinth 14:23 that the whole church met together "in one place".[4] Hence no Church of churches, but churches of different places. For "we read so much in the New Testament of Churches, in the Plurall number [Rom 16:4; 1 Cor 7:17; 11:16; 16:19; 2 Cor 8:1,19; Gal 1:2; 1 Thes 2:14; Rev 1:4; 2:23]," wrote the New England elders in their answer to the Old England inquirers.[5]

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1. WCCNE, 27. Italics mine.

2. CGCC, 45.

3. Lechford, Plain Dealing, "To the Reader".

4. WCCNE, 53. See also Lechford, Plain Dealing, 2.

5. [Davenport], An Answer of the Elders of the Severall chvrches, 63.

C. The Congregationals' View and Their Debate with the Presbyterians

The ambiguity of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' statements about the word "church" was eventually overcome in the early 1640s by both Presbyterians and Congregationals, which can be observed in the dissenting brethren's reaction to the Presbyterians' understanding of the church. (The view of the "Presbyterians" in England was, by and large, conditioned by the view of the Scottish commissioners, such as George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford.)[1]

The word "church", according to Gillespie, refers to "the Presbyterie [1 Tim 4:14] made up of Pastor and ruling Elders", i.e., "the representative body of the Church".[2] In Exodus 12:3,21, the young Scotsman had argued, God spoke unto "all the Congregation of Israel", but the context shows that only "the Elders of Israel" were present.[3] The church, for Rutherford, also signifies "Synods, Provinciall, and Oecumenicke".[4] To justify this, Gillespie reasoned that there was an

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1. For the English "Presbyterian" view, see Charles Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of the Independency of Churches (May 1643), 1-36, wherein the "Church" was said to be a "Synod", whose power was superior to that of "one single Congregation".

2. George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland (1641), 31, 114f, 131. In Baillie's definition, "A Presbytery is an ordinary meeting of the Pastors of the Churches neerly neighbouring, & of the ruling Elders deputed therefrom, for the exercise of discipline, so farre as concerns these neighbouring Churches in common." See Diss., 198f.

3. Gillespie, Assertion, 33. Believing that by "congregation" was meant "elders" and vice versa, Gillespie said: "he who was judged by the Elders, was said to bee judged by the Congregation, Ios. 20.6." See ibid., 114.

4. Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Pavls Presbyterie in Scotland, 86. "A Synod" was defined by Baillie as "a convention of Pastors and elders sent and deputed from diverse Presbyteries, meeting either ordinarily or upon occasion for the affaires that are common to those that sent them". See Diss., 198f.

analogy between "the government of the Church" and "the government of the State". Just as the state was governed through "particular Burghs", "Shires", and "Parliament", the church ought to be governed through particular congregation, "Presbytery", "Synod", and "the Nationall Assembly".[1] In short, the church was a presbytery or synod of many churches, and it followed from hence that the presbytery or the synod was the key-bearer.[2]

In response to the above interpretations, the dissenting brethren stated in the Apologeticall Narration that the visible church is no other than one congregation in one city, as was seen in the apostolic times:

> vve could not but imagine, that the first Churches planted by the Apostles, were ordinarily of no more in one city at first then might make up one entire congregation, ruled by their own Elders.[3]

This "entire congregation, ruled by their own Elders" was undoubtedly the key-bearer. As W[illiam] K[iffin] (d.1701), who later became a Baptist, stated: "Christ hath given this power [the keys] to his Church [the congregation], not to a Hierarchy, neither to a Nationall Presbytery, but to a company of Saints in a Congregationall way."[4]

The debate over whether the word "church" was a presbytery or a local congregation was in essence a debate over whether the visible church was one or many. Rutherford had reasoned that the visible church was "under one government". He based his argument upon two

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1. Gillespie, Assertion, 154f.

2. Supra, 28.

3. AN, 13. Italics mine.

4. W[illiam] K[iffin], "The Epistle to the Reader", in [Thomas Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory. See supra, 28.

reasons: first, the New Testament calls the visible church "the Church", rather than "churches". For instance, "hee [Paul]... called the Elders of the Church " (Acts 20:17); "Herod vexed the Church" (Acts 12); "Saul made havocke of the Church, I persecuted the Church" (Acts 8).[1] Second, the Christians in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Rome, Antioch, and Lystra multiplied in number so rapidly that it was simply impossible for such a multitude in each of these cities to gather together in one place for the public worship; therefore their meeting together must take place distributively.[2] Take churches at Jerusalem and Rome for examples:

> The Church of Jerusalem... grew from one hundred and twenty... to... eight thousand one hundred and twenty. [Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4] ... many thousands of the Jewes beleeved, Acts 5.14. multitudes of beleevers mo[r]e were added to the Lord... Acts 6.1. their number were multiplyed. Now it was not possible they could all meet in one house.... ... their meeting together must be taken distributively in diverse Congregations, not collectively....[3]

The church at Rome was composed of several houses, as indicated in Romans 16. However, "Paul stileth them one Church, and One body that had jurisdiction common to all, Rom. 12.3,4,5,6... [That is,] one church... one government...."[4]

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1. Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea, 74, 78, 81. Italics mine. For Presbyterians, the Church of Jerusalem that Saul persecuted stood for all the churches of Judea.

2. Ibid., 75ff. The biblical texts Rutherford chose were: Acts 13:1-3; 16:1-3; 21:18; 20:17,28; Rev 2:2; Rom 16; 12:3-6; 1 Tim 4:14.

3. Ibid., 74. This statement was diametrically opposed to the New England elders' statement: "the Christian Churches... are Congregationall, consisting onely of so many as may and doe meet together ordinarily in one place." See [Davenport], op. cit., 62.

4. Rutherford, op. cit., 77. Rutherford may have found his third reason in Acts 15, because he called the meeting at Jerusalem "a formall copy and draught of a generall Assembly". See ibid., 207. By this he seemed to mean that in Acts 15 there was suggested a subordination of the Presbytery or Synod of Antioch to the Synod

Diametrically opposed to the Presbyterians, the dissenting brethren contended that there is no visible entity called a "church" except visible churches. In the Apologeticall Narration, we see clearly that they preferred to use the word "Churches" rather than "Church".[1] Thomas Goodwin had argued to the effect that, unlike the church in the Old Testament that was "nationall" and "one", symbolised by "one candlestick", "the Churches under the Gospel are many," such as "the seven Churches of Asia" represented by the "seven golden candlesticks" (Rev 1:4).[2]

The dissenting brethren took exception to the Presbyterians' assertion that in the Acts of the Apostles the number of Christians in each city multiplied so rapidly as to assemble in several places and that the apostles were averse to erecting a church wherever they saw no presbytery formed. They wrote:

> that in every city where they [the apostles] came, the number of converts did or should arise to such a multitude as to make several and sundry congregations, or that the Apostles should stay the setting up of any Churches at all, untill they rose to such a numerous multiplication as might make such a Presbyterial combination, we did not imagine.

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or General Assembly of Jerusalem. In other words, Acts 15 implied that there were organised into one presbytery in one city several congregations, and into one synod in one province several presbyteries. Cf. Gillespie, Assertion, 179, wherein "the meeting at Antioch" was assumed to be either a presbytery or a synod.

1. AN, 3-7, 9, 11ff, 15.

2. ZE, 9. Cf. Samuel Eaton & Timothy Taylor, A Defence of Sundry Positions, and Scriptures alledged to justifie the Congregationall-Way (1645), 21: "The visible Church in the new Testament is not nationall, as the Iewes was; hence we reade of the Churches of Galatia, Macedonia, Iudea, not Church of Galatia, 1 Cor. 16.1. 2 Cor. 8.1." This argument is none other than the argument of Henry Jacob! See supra, 152.

Instead, they insisted that the church is "one entire congregation... in one city".[1] By using the word "entire" they tried to stress that the church in one city is a collective one, and that the church is a genus, rather than a species under a genus.

To defend their argument, the dissenting brethren invoked the puritans who had asserted that it was not tenable to say that early Christians in one city were too numerous to meet in one particular congregation:

> We found also those Non-conformists (that wrote against the Episcopal Government) in their Answer to the Arguments used for Episcopal Government over many Churches, brought from the instances of the multitude of Beleevers at Jerusalem, and other places and cities, mentioned in the New Testament, to assert that it could not be infallibly proved that any of those vve reade of in the Acts and elsewhere; vvere yet so numerous, as necessarily to exceed the limits of one particular congregation in those first times.[2]

In doing so, the dissenting brethren sought to convince their Presbyterian brethren that they interpreted the word "church" in the same way as the puritans had done.

The crux of the Congregationals' debate with the Presbyterians about the word "church" lies in this question: which is more real, the church particular or the church universal? Traditionally, the universal, though imperceptible to sense, was held to be more real (universalia sunt realia); whereas the particular, though perceptible to sense, was less real. Hence the Catholic Church was per se, whereas the particular congregation was accidens.[3] Now the Presbyterians

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1. AN, 13. Italics mine.

2. AN, 13.

3. This is just like the Eucharist: the body and blood of Christ are per se, while the elements of bread and wine are accidens.

remained faithful to the traditional concept and maintained that the church is a visible catholic body. This was, in the eyes of the Congregationals, too Romish a concept. The Congregationals believed that catholic church is invisible, not apprehensible by sense; therefore, it has no actual being, but is purely a notion in the mind of man, collected from observation of several particular churches. Only particular churches discerned by sense are visible, and hence have their real existence in both time and space. The catholic church comprehending all particular congregations in her bosom can not be gathered together into one place, whereas particular congregations can be.

II. How Does A Local Congregation Exercise the Keys?

It is beyond question that the Congregationals looked upon a local congregation as the key-bearer. But did they really advocate what Baillie later called "democracie and popular government in the Church"?[1] To answer this question, we should investigate their view of church government within the walls of a local congregation. In this investigation, we are, first of all, to examine the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' view, then the New England Congregationals' view, and finally the Congregationals' view and their debate with the Presbyterians.

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1. Diss., 181. Likewise, Rutherford accused the Congregationals of resolving "all government in the hands of the people, as in the highest and most soveraigne judicature, which is to make all Pastors, all overseers, all Judges." See Rutherford, op. cit., 45.

A. The Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans' View

Who rules within a local congregation, the clergy, or the laity? The reply of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans to this question, according to Dr Brachlow, was ambiguous.

The Elizabethan puritans, on the one hand, treated "Church officers" as the "angels of God, euen as Christ Iesus himselfe", the "eyes" of the congregation, the leaders and directors of the people, while asking the congregation "to suffer them selues willingly to be ruled and gouerned by those/ whom God hathe set ouer them". But on the other hand, church "officers" were considered to be the "servaunte[s]" of the "congregation"; whereas the congregation were granted the authority to examine the candidate for evidence of sound doctrine and a godly life, and then to "choose" and ordain him for ministry.[1] These contradictions could be overcome by what Dudley Fenner showed: although the officers had very great power in things of greatest moment, yet the people had liberty and power to bring in their counsel and objection, if they had any. (2 Chr 30:23; Acts 1:15,23,26; 1 Cor 5:4.)[2] Hence the Elizabethan puritans were in favour of a complex government. Cartwright asserted that

> in respecte of Christe the heade/ it is a Monarchie/ and in respecte of the... pastoures/ that gouerne in common... it is an Aristocratie... and in respecte that the people are not secluded/

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1. A parte of a register, 210; Travers, op. cit., 56, 185, 91; Chaderton, op. cit., 48; John Udall, A Demonstration of the trueth of that Discipline (n.p., n.d.), 29; Puritan Manifestoes, 12, 107; Brachlow, "The Elizabethan Roots", JEH, XXXVI, 245.

2. Dudley Fenner, Sacra Theologia (1632); cited in CGCC, 52f. What Fenner showed was actually agreeable to what Calvin had said: "Paul's course of action for excommunicating a man is the lawful one, provided the elders do not do it by themselves alone, but with the knowledge and approval of the church; in this way the multitude of the people does not decide the action but observes as witness and guardian so that nothing may be done according to the whim of a few." See Inst., IV, 12:7.

but haue their interest in churche matters/ it is a Democratie.[1]

This complex government was said to have an analogy to the civil government. As Martin Marprelate[2] put it:

> Such is the civil government of our Kingdom, monarchical in her Majesty's person; aristocratical in the Higher House of Parliament... democratical in the body of the Commons of the lower House of Parliament.[3]

The Elizabethan puritans declared that both church officers and people must counterbalance one another.

The Jacobean puritans advocated the same paradoxical theory in which the officers in a local congregation were both "spirituall fathers" and "children of the whole Church", and the people were both kings and subjects.[4] These inconsistencies were, in Dr Brachlow's analysis, due to the fact that the Jacobean puritans ascribed power theoretically to the people, but functionally to the church officers.[5] The Jacobean puritans also inclined to the church government in which three forms amalgamated. As Ames stated:

> The forme of this polity is altogether monarchicall in respect of Christ, the head and King; but as touching the visible and vicarious administration, it is of a mixt nature, partly as it were aristocraticall, and partly as it were democraticall.[6]

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1. Thomas Cartwright, A Replye to an answere made of M. Doctor VVhitgifte (n.p., 1573), 51. This complex government was originally suggested by Calvin to be the ideal form. It had since been repeated throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. See Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 172.

2. Martin Marprelate was the pseudonym, under which a series of violent puritan tracts attacking episcopacy were issued between 1588 and 1589. See The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. "The Marprelate Tracts".

3. Quoted in Pearson, Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 284.

4. Baynes, The Diocesans Tryall, 89; CS, 171.

5. CS, 187. Miller suggests the same idea, see his Orthodoxy, 174.

6. Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, I, 33:20.

B. The New England Congregationals' View

In his The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England, Cotton made it clear that Peter had received the keys on behalf of neither apostles nor elders, but of all professed believers.[1] It sounded democratic; but it was so only in terms of a local congregation being independent of any outside control, not in terms of the government within the local congregation.[2] It did not follow, as Cotton indicated elsewhere, that if elders in the local church "received their ordination from the Church", then "the Church hath a Lord-like power over them."[3] As a matter of fact, New Englanders thought highly of the ministers. In their letter to the brethren in Old England, they announced: "Indeed the keyes are given to the whole Church, yet the exercise and dispensation of them... is committed to the Ministers, who are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God I. Cor. 4.1."[4] Here we see that it was the local congregation, not the presbytery, that owned the keys (democracy); yet within that local congregation, it was the ministers, rather than the brethren, who de facto exercised the keys (aristocracy). Thus the New England Congregationals were not democrats in any respect.[5]

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1. Supra, 153f.

2. In his later work, Cotton seemed to change his position by saying that Peter had received the keys "not onely as an Apostle, but an Elder also, yea, and Believer too". See John Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Power thereof (1644), 4. It should be explained here that Cotton's earlier position aimed to answer the question whether a local congregation or a presbytery owned the keys; while his later position aimed to answer the question how the keys were distributed within the local congregation.

3. WCCNE, 44.

4. [Davenport], An Answer of the Elders, 67.

5. For the discussion of the supposedly democratic aspect of New

As has been noted, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans had had the vague idea that there was to be an equal share of power within a local congregation. However, it was not until 1642 that Cotton, for the first time, crystallised the puritan vague idea by setting forth the limits of the power of both elders and brethren. The brethren, Cotton wrote, could exercise these "acts of authority over their Elders": 1) They had power jure divino to "choose", "ordaine, and depose" their own ministers, however "illitterate" they might be (Num 8:10; Acts 1:15, 6:3,5-6). 2) They had power to "send forth" any of the elders for the service of the church (2 Cor 8:19,23; Acts 15:22). 3) They had power to "inquire, and heare, and assist in the judgment of all publique scandalls" (Mt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:4-5). On the other side, the elders expressed their rule over the brethren in these "acts of authority": 1) They had power to call the church together "upon any weighty occasion" (Acts 6:2). 2) They had power to open "the dores of speech and silence to any of the Assembly" (Acts 13:15). 3) They had "power to teach and exhort, to change, command, to reprove, and rebuke, with all authority" (1 Tim 5:7, 6:17).[1]

In distributing power between officers and brethren, Cotton, it seemed, sought to keep both parties mutually checked and balanced. He maintained that matters must be carried on neither "by the over-ruling power of the Presbytery", nor "by the consent of the major part of the Church, but by the generall and joynt consent of all

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England Congregationalism, see Miller, Orthodoxy, 170ff.

1. WCCNE, 94.

the members of the Church... with one accord, Acts 2.46".[1] Hence Cotton also used the old paradigm of three forms of church government and said:

> in respect of Christ (whose voyce only must be heard, and his rule kept) it is a Monarchy; in respect of the peoples power in choosing officers, and joynt power with the officers in admitting members, in censuring offenders, it is a Democracy; in respect of the officers instruction and reproof of the people in the publike ministery, and in ordering of all things in the Assembly, it is an Aristocracy.

For New Englanders, this mixed government could save the church from mere democracy that "might do well in Athens, a city fruitfull of pregnant wits, but will soone degenerate to an Anarchie (a popular tumult) amongst rude common people".[2] So could it save the church from mere aristocracy that would infringe "that liberty which Christ hath given to them [the people]".[3]

C. The Congregationals' View and Their Debate with the Presbyterians

We might expect that the dissenting brethren in their Apologeticall Narration would state much in favour of the rule of the brethren in a local congregation. But, unexpectedly, they laid more emphasis upon the authority and rule of the local elders over the brethren.[4] Why did they do so? The key to this question must be found in their careful

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1. WCCNE, 94. See also CGCC, 57: Power was committed "neither all to the people excluding the Presbytery, nor all to the Presbytery excluding the People. For this were to make the government of the Church either meerly Democracticall, or meerly Aristocraticall, neither of which we believe it might be."

2. WCCNE, 100.

3. CGCC, 47f.

4. AN, 13: "one entire congregation [should be] ruled by their own Elders." Italics mine.

steering between the Scylla of Presbyterians' classical and synodal aristocracy and the Charybdis of the popular anarchy of some of the Separatists and sectaries.

What did some of the Separatists and the sectaries say of the government of a particular congregation? Some of the Separatists, as represented by John Smyth, queried the rule that only ordained ministers could administer the sacraments: "It may be questioned whither the Church may not as well administer the Seales of the covenant before they have Officers, as Pray, Prophesy, Elect Officers and the rest."[1] It is plain that, with these radicals, lay members of the church not only had the right to choose their minister, to preach or "prophesy", but also had the right to administer the sacraments. In these Separatists' view, "a church could exist without him [the minister] but not he without a church."[2] In the same vein, the sectaries, in the person of Mrs Katherine Chidley,[3] stated that private men may lawfully preach the Word and administer the sacraments.[4] They reasoned that "as a private Citizen may become a Magistrate, so a private member may become a Minister." "Therefore," they continued, "the Churches of Christ may... subsist... without

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1. The Works of John Smyth, II, 419f.

2. E.S. Morgan, Roger Williams: The Church and the State (N.Y., 1967), 21.

3. Katherine Chidley (d.1653) was the first woman to defend Independency in print. She began her unorthodox career as a young wife and mother in Shrewsbury, where she attended private conventicles with her husband, a tailor. See BDBR.

4. Katherine Chidley, The Ivstification of the Independent Chvrches of Christ (1641), 8. As discussed before, the sectaries also called themselves "Independents", see supra, 48.

Pastor... and enjoy the power of Christ amongst themselves." They were convinced that, in any event, "the Church of Christ is greater than all the Ministers," for

> who hath a greater measure of the Spirit than beleevers? and who hath more skill than he that hath been trained up in the Schoole of Christ? ... and who hath greater authority upon the earth then they that are visible Saints?[1]

Obviously the sectaries would be pleased with a popular government, in which the role of the ministry was minimised and all private members could act as pastors and elders.[2]

Contrarily, the Presbyterians maintained that the government of a local congregation should be aristocratic. Gillespie argued that

> in every Christian Congregation, there are some Rulers, and some ruled, some Governors, some governed, some that command, some that obey, as is manifest from Hebr. 13.17. I Thes. 5.12. I Tim. 5.17. But if the whole Congregation have the Rule and Government, who then shall be ruled and governed?[3]

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1. Ibid., 3, 7, 15.

2. Dismayed by the radicals, Cotton wrote: "wee be far from allowing that sacrilegious usurpation of the Ministers Office, which wee heare of (to our griefe) to be practised in some places, that private Christians ordinarily take upon them to preach the Gospel publikely, and to minister the Sacraments." See Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, 6.

3. Gillespie, Assertion, 110. Rutherford argued the same way: "If the Eldership... be rulers... taking care of the house of God, I Tim. 3.4.5. Such as rule well the people, I Tim. 5.17. Such as must rule with diligence, Rom. 12.8. and feed the flock of God... taking the oversight... I Pet. 5.2. such as are over the people in the Lord, I Thes.5.12. such as rule over the people and the believers, watching for their soules, and must give an account to God... Heb. 13.17.18. Then have the Elders by divine right a jurisdiction over the Lords people... and so the Elders... are above the people. And so by no reason can the people be over their overseers." See Rutherford, A Peaceable and Temperate Plea, 36.

Moreover, on the basis of the Pauline metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12:19, Gillespie compared "the Rulers and Governors of a Congregation" to the principal members of the body of Christ, i.e., "Heads, Eares, Mouths, &c. to the Congregation". It followed hence that the people were less important members.[1]

The dissenting brethren in this respect seemed to be on the side of the Presbyterians, for they declared in the Apologeticall Narration that

> there should be several Elders in every congregation, who had power over them in the Lord; and we judged that all those precepts, obey your Elders, and them that are over you, were... meant of the Pastours and Teachers, and other Elders that were set over them in each particular congregation respectively, and to be as certainly the intendment of the holy Ghost, as in those like commands, Wives obey your owne husbands, Servants your own governours, to be meant of their several Families respectively.[2]

This statement sounds like the statements made by the Presbyterians, because it stressed also that in every congregation there should be some rulers, and some ruled, some governors, some governed, some that command, some that obey.

None the less, it must be noted that both statements, Presbyterian and Congregational, did not truly represent their respective positions. To ascertain this, we may, first of all, look at the Presbyterian view as a whole. As indicated, the Presbyterians insisted that the presbytery or the synod is the locus of ecclesial power, while the local church is not.[3] For this reason, the Presbyterians thought little of the eldership of the local church, but

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1. Loc. cit. See also Rutherford, op. cit., 64: "Guides are eyes, eares, fathers, gifted-teachers, Eph. 4.11. But the whole body is not an eye, for then where were the hearing? I Cor. 12.17."

2. AN, 14.

3. Supra, 155f.

much of the eldership of the presbytery or the synod. Gillespie claimed that it was not possible for the local church to exercise jurisdiction "without great confusion and disorders". Hence only by putting the power in the hands of those who were "the members of Nationall and Oecumenicall Councils" and were the "men of knowledge and discretion" could the church be free from chaos. The rule of the aristos was necessary in that "the greater part" of congregations were so "ignorant" that they were unable to "examine and try the learning, gifts, soundnesse of men for the Ministry" and "ordaine them", to "judge of question and controversies of faith" and "determine the same", and to "find out and discover Hereticks" and "excommunicate them from churches".[1]

If the Presbyterians were said to put power in the hands of the classical presbytery or provincial synod, the Congregationals seemed to delegate power to the local ministers and elders.

> We could not therefore but judge it a safe... way to retaine the government of our severall congregations for matter of discipline within themselves, to be exercised by their own Elders, whereof we had... three at least in each congregation, whom we were subject to....[2]

Here they thought highly of the local presbytery, but it does not follow from hence that they thought nothing of the fraternity. The fact is that they, following the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans, laid the same stress on the equal share and interest of power. As they stated in the Apologeticall Narration:

> Yea and our own Master Cartwright, holy Baynes, and other old Non-conformists, place the power of Excommunication in the Eldership of each particular Church with the consent of the

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1. Gillespie, Assertion, 112ff; Edwards, Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations, 6.

2. AN, 14. Italics mine.

Church [people].[1]

But it was after the publication of the Apologeticall Narration that the dissenting brethren's thought on this became clearer. In their preface to Cotton's The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye sought to make both people and officers balance and check each other. Like later bourgeois revolutionaries, they seemed to call on the "third estate" to claim power from the "first estate":

> In those former darker times... all manner of interest in power... was wholly left... to them [the clergy]: whilst the People... having given up their soules to an implicite faith in what was to be beleeved, did much more suffer themselves to be deprived of all Liberties in Church-affaires. This royall donation bestowed by Christ upon his Church, was taken up and placed in so high thrones of Bishops, Popes, Generall Councells... in so great a remotenesse from the people... now... the people also have begun to plead and sue for a portion.[2]

Then they, in some degree, restated Cotton's theory of division of powers within a local congregation that "consisteth both of Elders and Brethren". The elders, they said, were given "a binding power of Rule and Authoritie", while the brethren were given "an interest of power and priviledge to concurre with them". Both powers given by Christ were distinct from each other, just as, in a municipal corporation, "the interest of the Common-Councell or body of the people... is distinct from that of the company of Aldermen [the rulers]." However they both must be mutually checked and balanced.

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1. AN, 12f. Italics mine. Goodwin later argued from 1 Corinthians 5 that "the power of excommunication belongs to the elders of Corinth met together with the churches." In like manner, Bridge had contended that elders must decide controversies coram ecclesia (Acts 15:22). See George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, ed. David Meek (Edinburgh, 1846), 16f, 20.

2. Thomas Goodwin & Philip Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven, sigs. A2r-v.

The brethren "could not proceed to any publique censures, without they have Elders over them". Nor had the elders power "to censure without the concurrence of the people". That is to say, no party could exercise jurisdiction without the consent of the other.[1]

As to why the government of the local congregation must be both aristocratic and democratic, Goodwin and Nye explained:

> by means of this... golden ballancing and poysing of power and interest... in Elders and the Brethren, this Government might neither degenerate into Lordlinesse and oppression in rulers over the Flock... nor yet into Anarchy and confusion in the Flock among themselves.[2]

Now we turn to the questions raised above: why did the dissenting brethren lay more emphasis upon the authority and rule of the local elders over the brotherhood? Being apologists, the dissenting brethren must be selective in their presentations. Some things required greater emphasis, while some things less. They were especially sensitive to their being identified with one of the sects of the day. It was to disown the democracy of some of the Separatists and the sectaries and to shorten the distance between the Reformed Churches and their gathered churches that they put special emphasis on the authority and rule of the elders.

But, at the same time, they sought to express their dissent from the Presbyterians by putting the power in the hands of the local elders. In brief, between the local "popular" government of some of

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1. Ibid., sigs. A3r-v, A5r. This argument must have had a special appeal to the Long Parliament, who were, after all, seeking the same thing in the king's government.

2. Ibid., sig. A5v.

the Separatists and the sectaries and the Presbyterians' classical or synodal aristocracy, the Congregationals, at least in theory, tried to follow the middle way: local aristocracy mixed with local democracy.[1]

To conclude, in a local congregation, elders had "rule" and "authority", and brethren had "interest" and "liberty" to "concur with them". It must be pointed out here that the Congregationals did not suggest that elders and brethren in this local congregation were absolutely equal. Actually their suggestion was that the elders' rule or authority was more or less active; while the brethren's interest or liberty was more or less passive.

III. What Is the Relationship between Local Church and Synod?

Now we move on to the dissenting brethren's outlook on the relationship between synod and local congregation. The dissenting brethren, as we know, regarded the latter as the key-holder. But how did they think of the synod? Before we discuss this question, we must, first of all, have some knowledge of the Elizabethan puritans' "congregational presbyterianism", which later on drifted into the Jacobean puritans' "presbyterial congregationalism"; and then some general idea of how presbyterial congregationalism eventually drifted into New England Congregationalism.

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1. Theoretically, the dissenting brethren, instead of saying anything in favour of a popular government, said much in favour of an equal share of power within a local congregation. Despite this, they, in practice, had made some allowances for the popular government. See supra, 145.

A. The Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritans' View

The Elizabethan puritans' congregational presbyterianism began with Thomas Cartwright and some other nonconformists. Cartwright, "the Patriarche" of the puritans,[1] wished to establish a hierarchical structure of presbyteries (consistories), conferences (classes), provincial synods, national assemblies (convocations), and the ecumenical council, which would provide a source of unity.[2] "The Conferences are to be kept once in six weeks" and the synod "is to be held every halfe yeare".[3] In such conferences or assemblies,

> there is also to be chosen one that may be set over the assemblies, who may moderate and direct them. His duty is to see, that the assemblies be held godly, quiet, and comely. Therefore it belongeth unto him to begin and end the conference with prayer, to know every mans instructions, to propound in order the things that are to bee handled, to gather their opinions, and to propound what is the opinion of the greater part.

Suggesting that the decision made by a classis or a synod be obeyed, Cartwright wrote: "no particular Church hath power over another, yet every particular Church... ought to obey the opinion of more Churches with whom they communicate."[4] Here he actually suggested that each conference, synod, or assembly had authority over its constituent parts.

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1. Quoted in Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603, 270.

2. [Thomas Cartwright], A Directory of Church-government (1644), sigs. C2v, C3r-v, C4r. In English presbyterianism, "presbytery" was equivalent to the Scottish "kirk session"; "conference" or "classis", to the Scottish "presbytery". Both English "presbytery" and Scottish "kirk session" were called "consistory" on the Continent. The nonconformists, like later Congregationals, agreed that "in every particular Church there ought to be a Presbytery, which is a Consistory." See ibid., sig. A2v; Diss., 200; Pearson, op. cit., 76f.

3. [Cartwright], Directory, sigs. C2v, C3v.

4. Ibid., sigs. A3r-v.

But on the other hand, Cartwright distinguished "The Sacred Discipline of the Church, described in the Word of God" from "The Synodicall Discipline gathered out of the Synods and use of the Churches".[1] The "sacred discipline", namely, the government of each local congregation by its own "presbytery", was considered to be "delivered by Christ and set downe in the holy Scriptures", and therefore "necessary for all times; whereas the "synodical discipline", i.e., the hierarchical synodical structure, was

> not expresly, confirmed by Authority of the holy Scripture, but is applied to the use and times of the Church as their divers states may require, according to the Analogy and generall Rules of the same Scripture, is to bee judged profitable for the Churches that receive it, but may bee changed in such things as belong not to the essense of the Discipline....[2]

It is obvious that Cartwright regarded the local consistories as jure divino and thought of provincial and national synods as only derived by analogy from Scripture. In other words, the consistory was "primary" and "fundamental"; while the synod was "derived" and "adiaphoral".[3]

Cartwright's undercurrent of congregationalism can be detected in his Directory, in which he wrote on the function of the local consistory:

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1. Ibid., sigs. A2r, A3v. The original form of the Directory was Walter Travers' Book of Discipline (1586) that was divided into two parts, one entitled Disciplina Ecclesiae Sacra Dei verbo descripta, and the other Disciplina Synodica ex ecclesiarum, etc. Travers' Book of Discipline later on grew into Cartwright's Directory. See Pearson op. cit., 252, 257, 405.

2. [Cartwright], Directory, sigs. A2r, C4r. Italics mine.

3. For this argument, see C.G. Bolam & Jeremy Goring, The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism (1968), 32.

> in all the greater affaires of the Church, as in Excommunicating of any, and in choosing and deposing of Church Ministers, nothing may be concluded without the knowledge and consent of the [particular] Church....[1]
>
> .....
>
> In the Consistory the most voices are to be yeelded unto. In it onely Ecclesiasticall things are to be handled....
>
> The obstinate after admonition by the Consistory, though the fault have not been so great, are to be suspended from the Communion....
>
> He that hath committed great offences... albeit he professe his repentance in words, yet for the triall thereof... let him for a time be kept from the Communion. Which... how long it is to be done, let the Consistory... determine. After which, if the party repent, he is brotherly to be received againe.[2]

As regards classis, synod, and general council, they only served as a graduated scale of courts. To each of these courts difficult causes were to be referred for resolution from each lower meeting:

> Those Assemblies, according to their kinds have greate authority, if they be greater; and lesse if they be lesse. Therefore... if any thinke himselfe injured by the lesse meeting, he may appeale still unto a greater, till he come to a generall Councell, so that he ascend orderly from the lesse to the next greater.[3]

Here the classes and synods are seen to be formed only in response to the need for an authority to make decisions that local consistories and classes were unable to make.

The other Elizabethan puritans seemed to have the same congregational complexion. William Whitaker argued against Cardinal Bellarmine (d.1621) that "Excommunication belongs not to the universall Church, but onely to a particular Congregation."[4] Based on

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1. According to Cartwright, all the male adults of a voluntarily gathered parish church should have the right to call and choose their minister, or at least to approve or disapprove of what the bishop had chosen. See LAL, 31; MWD, 61. Cf. GP, 531.

2. [Cartwright], Directory, sigs. A3r, B4r-v, C1r.

3. Ibid., sig. C2v. Italics mine. Cf. The Works of John Whitgift, I, 375.

4. Quoted in CGCC, 10. Robert Parker attested Whitaker's congregational cast, when he wrote: "Whitaker... also prove[s]

Matthew 18:17, Lawrence Chaderton contended that power for church discipline resided in the body of the church.[1] And Walter Travers offered the local congregation the high privilege of making the "determinations off the Assembly... voide and off none effect".[2]

It is obvious that "most Elizabethan puritans", as Professor Collinson remarks, were "reluctant to concede to synods anything beyond the power to 'counsel' and 'advise' allowed in later years by the Independents", and that they held that powers must be derived "upwards, from the constituent congregations, and not downwards, from a... synodical hierarchy".[3]

Cartwright's congregational tendency was developed by the Jacobean puritans, whose "congregationalism" was actually sandwiched between Elizabethan "presbyterianism" and Caroline Congregationalism. Paul Baynes, in his controversy with Bishop George Downame (d.1634) over the issue of church polity, argued that local churches, like Jewish synagogues, held the power only in "ordinarie matters"; and that a synod, like the Temple of Jerusalem, possessed the power "onely in some reserved causes". But the ecclesiastical power, he said inconsistently, must be bound within the limits only of the local

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[that] the keyes were given to every perticuler [sic] Church of the faithfull." See MS. Eng. th. e. 158, fol. 110. See also supra, 151.

1. BDBR, s.v., "John Robinson".

2. Travers, A full and plaine declaration, 179; CS, 206f. Walter Travers (1548?-1635) was elected Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1569. He was later appointed lecturer at the Temple church, London in 1581. During Hooker's mastership of the Temple, Travers often confuted in the afternoon what Hooker had preached in the morning. See DNB.

3. GP, 540.

church.[1] Robert Parker, though he said that a synod could be called a "church", stressed that the synod was only a "Consociation" of local churches that met together to discuss problems that could not be decided at the local level. Moreover, its "authoretie must rest more principallie & essentialy in those [perticuler] Churches."[2] Likewise, Henry Jacob insisted that "there ought to be... a consociatio[n] of Congregations or Churches, namely by way of Synods." "But", he added, there should be no "subordination, or a subjection of the congregations under any higher spirituall authoritie absolute, save onely Christs, and the holy Scriptures", and the synod could not "impose their actes & canons" on "the [local] Co[n]gregations".[3] With William Bradshaw, if one of the local churches erred in matters of faith, the synod could do nothing but offer advice and counsel.[4] William Ames held that, although "the administration of the censure belongs to Assemblies and Synods, when any difficultie doth arise," yet it "ordinarily" belonged to the local churches.[5]

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1. Baynes, The Diocesans Tryall, 8, 13; CS, 211, 213.

2. MS. Eng. th. e. 158, fols. 110f, 160ff; CS, 211.

3. Jacob, A Confession and Protestation of Faith, sig. B2r; idem, To the right High and mightie, Prince, Iames, 13; idem, An Attestation of many Learned, Godly, and famous Divines, 100; CS, 221.

4. CS, 211; Bradshaw, Several treatises, 37.

5. Ames, Conscience, IV, 89; CS, 212. Ames, whom both Presbyterians and Congregationals later looked up to as one of their spiritual forebears, was always found to be on the horns of a dilemma. John Paget remarked that he found Ames "wavering in his opinion, touching the authority of Synods", for he sometimes peremptorily restrained "all Ecclesiasticall authority unto particular Congregations" (congregational democracy) and "sometimes acknowledged that Synods had power to judge of causes" (presbyterial aristocracy). See John Paget, A Defence of Chvrch-Government, Exercised in Presbyteriall, Classicall, & Synodall Assemblies (1641), 106; quoted in Bolam & Goring, op. cit., 34.

B. The New England Congregationals' View

The more or less vertical relationship between synod and local congregations in the Jacobean puritans' thinking was eventually replaced by the horizontal relationship between "synod" and particular churches in New England Congregationalism, in which there were two foci: the autonomy of a local church and the brotherly fellowship between local churches.

In New England, each congregation "hath power of government in, and by it selfe", just as each "Towne corporate" confined its power to itself.[1] No jurisdiction could be exercised by one particular congregation over another, because all particular congregations were on a par with one another. As John Cotton said:

> all of them are sisters [Cant. 8.8], all of them Sarahs, all of them Queenes, none an Hagar, none of them Concubines... [Gal. 4.26; Cant. 6.8]. Finally, all of them, are Candlesticks of the same precious mettell, and in the middest of them all Christ equally walketh [Rev. 1.12,13].[2]

None the less, the selfhood of a particular congregation must be balanced by its "catholicity". Hence the other focus in the same ellipse: the "Communion between severall Churches".[3] It was this church koinonia that preserved each congregation from being "independent" of the other.

One of the seven forms of communion between churches at the settlement of New England was the communion "by way of Congregation", an occasional synod[4] of many churches for examining and discussing

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1. Lechford, Plain Dealing, 14; [Davenport] op. cit., 67.
2. Cotton, The True Constitvtion of a particular visible Church, 12.
3. According to Cotton, there was a "sevenfold Communion between severall Churches". See WCCNE, 103.
4. For Elizabethan puritans and later Presbyterians, synods should

"either corrupt opinions, or suspicious practices, which... cannot well be healed in any one alone". The process of convening and holding the synod was described as follows. When there arose a dispute within a church, the church, being unable to settle the dispute, must "seeke for counsell and advice from neighbour Churches". Considering that the dispute was not only "peculiar" to that church, but also "common" to all the churches, and that the "verity and unity of judgement in matters of doctrine" and the "integrity of life throughout all the Churches" must be maintained, the elders of the other churches should solicit "all the Churches thereabout" to send some messengers "at such a time, to such a Church", where the synod would be held and "the matter in question" would be considered. Having held a "judicious" inquiry into the case and found it true, the messengers from sundry churches must condemn the "errours in doctrine or practice" in order to prevent the "Heresie" from being spread, and then exhort and advise the offending church to give them up. If the offending church paid no heed to "the counsell of their Brethren", "the churches offended" must withdraw from them "the right hand of fellowship", that is, treat the church offending as an "Heathen and Publican", although they had no power "to deliver them to Satan" (Mt 18:15-6; 2 Thes 3:6).[1]

It must be borne in mind that there were three points regarding the synod in New England. First, the "consociation of Churches into Classes and Synods" was based on Acts 15:2, wherein the church at

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meet regularly; while for Jacobean puritans and later Congregationals, synods should meet occasionally and seldom. See supra, 173, 177; infra, 186.

1. WCCNE, 106ff; Cotton, The True Constitvtion, 12f. Cf. Lechford, Plain Dealing, 13.

Antioch was said to send messengers to the church at Jerusalem.[1] Second, the synod was "rather a teaching then a governing Church"; it was held "not for Jurisdiction", but "for brotherly consultation", and for "advice or counsaile", which was "the royall rule of Love... in healing offences, given by our Saviour, Matt. 18.17".[2] Third, the particular congregation must not give the synod "an undue power"; it must prevent its sovereignty from being infringed.[3]

C. The Congregationals' View and Their Debate with the Presbyterians

The Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' ambiguous views of the relationship between particular congregation and synod were manipulated by both Congregationals and Presbyterians for historical support of their respective polities. The dissenting brethren asserted that some of the "old Non-conformists", such as Parker, had called "Presbyterial and Provincial Assemblies" "Ecclesiae ortae" [derived churches] and called "particular congregations Ecclesiae primae [primary churches], as wherein firstly the power... of a Church is to be exercised." In other words, they had restricted all jurisdiction to a particular congregation.[4] Thus the dissenting brethren took "Master

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1. CGCC, 64.

2. Richard Mather & William Tompson, A Modest & Brotherly Ansvver to Mr. Charles Herle (1644), 7; WCCNE, 96, 114; Lechford, Plain Dealing, 14.

3. CGCC, 64ff.

4. For Parker's congregational view of this, see MS. Eng. th. e. 158, fols. 96-100, 113-6, 167. According to Sprunger, Parker's De Politeia ecclesiastica was paradoxically in favour of both presbyterian and congregational views. See DP, 344. Cf. infra, 181.

Cartwright, holy Baynes and other old Non-conformists" to be on their side rather than on the Presbyterians'.[1] They claimed that "the draughts of Discipline which they had drawn" were "not in all things the very same with the practices of the Reformed Churches", but "came much more commended to us".[2] Contrarily, Alexander Forbes, a Presbyterian divine, made the "old Non-conformists", such as Baynes and Parker, sheer Presbyterians. He alleged that Baynes was "fully for Presbyteriall Government". "As for Parker", he said:

> he indeed calleth particular Congregations Ecclesias primas, and Synods Ecclesias ortas, but not as they [the dissenting brethren] affirme, because the power... of a Church is firstly to be exercised in these Congregations; but because... this power is firstly in these Congregations... [that is to say] the primae Ecclesiae having a primary being before the ortae.[3]

Here Forbes tried to stress that the "old Non-conformists" had actually looked upon synods, rather than particular congregations, as the first to exercise ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction.

To a certain extent, it was the two different versions of what the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans had said of the relationship between particular congregation and synod that resulted in the two different church polities -- Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. The following is our examination of the statements in the Apologeticall Narration concerning this relationship, which were diametrically opposed to the Presbyterian theory as peddled by the Scottish envoys amongst Englishmen in the City of London in 1641-2.

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1. AN, 12f.

2. AN, 4. By "the draughts of Discipline" was actually meant Walter Travers' Book of Discipline, see supra, 174n.

3. [Forbes], An Anatomy of Independency, 36.

1. Which is primary, a synod or a particular congregation?

We may begin with the question of what the Scottish Presbyterians had preached before the dissenting brethren aired their views. The Scotsmen had preached a strict hierarchical structure, in which there was a subordination of inferior ecclesiastical courts to superior ones. The national assembly, "a supreame Ecclesiastical Court", was compared to the Jewish "Sanedrim, which governed the whole [Jewish] Nation, and had authority over the inferior Courts". The synod or the presbytery, subject to the national assembly, was compared to the Jewish "Presbytery" (Lk 22:66, Acts 22:5), which was "made up possibly out of the particular Synagogues within the Cities". And the local consistory was compared to the Jewish local synagogue.[1] The Scottish economy can be summarised as this: particular congregations must be governed "by a combined Presbyterie of the Elders of several congregations united in one for government".[2] It is obvious that the latter was held to be the primary, and that the chief reason for setting up this economy was to ensure the uniformity of the church. The subordination of inferior courts to superior ones eventually became one of the principal issues dividing the Presbyterians and the Congregationals.

There is no doubt that the Congregationals thought the synod useful and necessary. Like their "own Master Cartwright, holy Baynes, and other old Non-conformists", the dissenting brethren stated in the Apologeticall Narration that if the elders and brethren in a particular congregation "do miscarry", then they must "subject them to

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1. Gillespie, Assertion, 164f. For the similar idea, see Herle, The Independency on Scriptures of Independency of Churches, 9f.

2. AN, 12.

such Presbyterial and Provincial Assemblies as the proper refuge for appeales and for compounding of differences amongst Churches".[1] By "Presbyterial and Provincial Assemblies", they actually meant the "comunion of Churches", their "comon law", "by the obligation of" which, the local church, "chalenged to offend or differ", ought to submit itself to "the most full & open tryall & examination by other neighbour Churches offended thereat, of what ever hath given the offence". For, according to the "Apostolical command", no church was allowed to give offence to the other churches of God. And "this", the dissenting brethren added, "our Churches did mutually and universally acknowledge... as a sacred and undoubted principle and supreame law to be observed among all Churches."[2]

But at the same time as they endorsed the role of the synod, they adhered, first and last, to the principle that there should be no higher authority than the authority of the local congregation. This was because the "particular congregation" was the primary, in which "an entire and compleat power of jurisdiction" was "firstly... to be exercised" (ecclesia prima); and the "combination of the Elders of many Churches" or the synod was the derived (ecclesiae ortae). If the synod was taken to be "the first compleat and entire seat of Church power over each congregation so combined", and was allowed to "assume that authority over those Churches they feed", then it was to them a

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1. AN, 12f. Later, Goodwin and Nye made a similar statement: "because these particular Congregations, both Elders and People, may disagree and miscarry... He [Christ] therefore... asserteth an association... of Churches, sending their Elders and Messengers into a Synod... [for] rectifying Mal-administrations and healing dissentions in particular Congregations, and the like cases." See Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sig. A3v.

2. AN, 16f.

question, and was "judged to be an additament" to the apostolic precepts.[1] In short, the synod was nothing but the extension of the local churches.

The relationship between synod and local congregation bore analogy to the relationship between state and corporation. This idea was expressed in the Apologeticall Narration:

> yet not clayming to our selves an independent power in every congregation, to give account or be subject to none others, but onely a ful and entire power compleat within our selves...; such as Corporations enjoy, who have the power and priviledge to passe sentence for life & death within themselves, and yet are accountable to the State they live in.[2]

The local congregation, as John Goodwin understood it, was like a city compact in a kingdom, which was granted the right to exercise "Government and rule" within itself on the one hand and was accountable to the synod (the kingdom) for its actions on the other.[3]

2. Respective interpretations of the "synod" at Jerusalem (Acts 15)

Presbyterians' insistence upon the primacy of the synod was mainly based upon their interpretation of the synod at Jerusalem. Rutherford argued that it was lawful for a doctrinally- or

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1. AN, 12-5. Goodwin and Nye later uttered the same thoughts: Christ asserted each particular congregation to be "the first and primary subject of a compleate and entire power within it selfe over its owne members". Therefore, "a greater Assembly of Elders", though "more wise and judicious", should not assume power to themselves, and entrench upon "the priviledge of intire Jurisdiction committed unto each Congregation". For the synod was after all "abstracted from" the local congregation. See Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sigs. A3r, A4r, A6r-v.

2. AN, 14.

3. Goodwin, M.S. to A.S. with A Plea for Libertie of Conscience, 73.

disciplinally-disturbed congregation to seek help from a synod and to receive decrees from it, because it was written in Acts 15 and 16 that,

> when the Churches of Syria, Sylicia, Antioch and Jerusalem were troubled with a question, whether they should keep the Law of Moses, and be circumcised, and could not determine it amongst themselves in their particular Churches, they had their recourse to an assembly of Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, who gave out a Decree and Canon anent that question, which the Churches [of Syria, Cylicia, Antioch, and Jerusalem] were obliged to keep [Acts 15:22,23; 16:4]....[1]

Here Rutherford stressed these points: first, the synod at Jerusalem was a meeting of many churches: the "Churches of Syria, Sylicia, Antioch and Jerusalem". Second, it was composed of none but the "Apostles and Elders" (Acts 15:28; 16:4; 21:25).[2] Third, the decree from the synod was binding upon all churches, and hence infallible. (Apart from these, the Presbyterians stressed that the synod was an "ordinary synod".)[3]

The Congregationals interpreted the synod at Jerusalem differently. First, it was an assembly of two churches only, "the Church of Jerusalem" and "the Messengers from the Church of Antioch". Second, it was an "Assembly of Apostles, Elders, and Brethren".[4]

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1. Rutherford, op. cit., 203. See also Edwards, Reasons, 14f.

2. The "multitude" in Acts 15 was interpreted as the apostles and elders. See Gillespie, Assertion, 118.

3. JLJ, 211.

4. Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sig. A4v. The "multitude" in Acts 15, they argued, suggested that the "brethren", i.e., "the whole church", were present at the synod. See Gillespie, Notes, 42.

Third, the decree from the synod should not be "imposed on" the "particular churches".[1] Finally, it was "not an ordinary" or "a formall Synod", but an occasional one.[2]

3. Authoritative "Excommunication" or brotherly "Non-communion"?

The question whether a synod should exercise authoritative excommunication or brotherly "non-communion" was the point at issue between Presbyterians and Congregationals.[3] The Presbyterians held that the synod must exercise the former. On the basis of Revelation 2:2, Rutherford argued that once ministers were tried by the presbytery or the synod and found to be false, they must be "authoritatively" excommunicated. To justify the ex cathedra nature of the act, the Professor of Divinity at St Andrews invoked Canticles 3:15 and said that "Take us little foxes [that spoile the vines], is an Act of authoritative and disciplinary taking enjoyned to the church... [while] brotherly advise is not authority."[4] Thus, having thrown off the yoke of Rome and Canterbury, the Presbyterians, it seemed to John Milton, tried to establish a new authoritarian system instead, which ran counter to the spirit of Protestantism.[5]

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1. [Henry Burton], Christ on His Throne (n.p., 1640), 56ff.

2. JLJ, 213; Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sig. A4v.

3. Baillie wrote on 15 March 1641: "Our only considerable difference will be about the jurisdiction of Synods and Presbyteries." See LJ, I, 311. He admitted later that if they had agreed with each other on this basic issue, the difficulty would have been "small in any other matter". See LJ, II, 205.

4. Rutherford, op. cit., 75, 227.

5. John Milton later described the Scottish Presbyterian system as a "diocesan presbytery, claiming to itself a lordly power and superintendency both over flocks and pastors". One of his sonnets

On the contrary, the dissenting brethren insisted that the synod did not exist to exercise the "power of Excommunicating or delivering unto Satan, either the Congregations or the Members of them", but to admonish "the peccant Churches"[1] without infringing the "liberty" with which "Christ hath endowed his Churches".[2]

But what was to be done if the erring churches turned a deaf ear to the brotherly admonition and persisted in their errors? In this case, the dissenting brethren answered that

> the Churches offended may & ought upon the impenitency of those Churches, persisting in their errour and miscarriage to pronounce that heavy sentence, against them, of with-drewing and renouncing all Christian communion with them until they do repent....[3]

To put it clearly, the synod must pronounce the sentence of withdrawal from, or non-communion with, them so that they might repent.

The dissenting brethren then made a comparison between authoritative excommunication and brotherly non-communion. They reasoned, firstly, that the former had "no warrant in the Scriptures"; whereas the latter had:

> And what further authority, or proceedings purely Ecclesiasticall, of one, or many sister Churches towards another whole Church, or Churches offending, ... the Scriptures doe hold forth... for our parts vve savv not then, nor do yet see. And likewise we did then suppose, and doe yet... that it is a command from Christ enjoyned to Churches that are finally offended to denounce such a sentence of Non-communion and withdrawing from them whilst impenitent, as unworthy to hold forth the name of

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reads as follows: "Because you have thrown off your Prelate lord/ ..../ Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword/ To force our consciences that Christ set free/ And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,/ Taught ye by meer A.S. [Adam Steuart] and Rutherford?/ ..../ New PRESBYTER is but old PRIEST writ large." Quoted in Masson, The Life of John Milton, III, 468f. Italics mine.

1. Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sig. A3v.

2. AN, 19.

3. AN, 17.

Christ.

Secondly, the latter in effect did catch hold of offenders' consciences; whereas the former did not:

> these [non-communion and withdrawing] would be... effectuall means... to awe... Churches... that mens consciences [might] be accordingly taken therewith, so as to subject themselves whether unto the one way or the other: For suppose... [the] authoritative power in the greater part of Churches combined to excommunicate other Churches, &c. to be the ordinance of God, yet unlesse it does take hold of mens consciences, and be received amongst all Churches, the offending Churches will sleight all such Excommunications as much, as they may be supposed to doe our way of protestation and sentence of Non-communion.[1]

In a word, brotherly non-communion was more effective than authoritative excommunication in that it was biblically enjoined and was able to convince men of their errors without terrifying and vexing them.

Now we have seen that Congregational churches were "endowed" with these two: "liberty and equality".[2] As the dissenting brethren stated later: the synod was "to assist, guide, and direct them [the local churches], and not... to administer it [the power of the keys] for them, but with them [equality], and by them [liberty or autonomy]".[3]

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1. AN, 17ff.

2. AN, 19. Italics mine.

3. Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, Keyes, sig. A4r. See

4. The Congregational economy -- chaotic?

To the minds of many 17th-century men, the radical idea of religious equality and autonomy would in time reduce to total chaos not only the church but also the whole society. As Adam Steuart expressed his worry:

> If an Authoritative power cannot hold in the Church, or among Churches, because that we are all Brethren, and Sisters, no more can it hold in the State betwixt King, and Subject; the father, and the son; the master, and the servant; for we are all Brethren in Christ: so this foundation... will destroy all sort of Politicall, and Domesticall Authority.[1]

Therefore, it is not surprising that the Presbyterians accused the Congregationals of creating anarchy. The dissenting brethren listed the Presbyterian complaints:

> the common prejudice and exception laid into all mens thoughts against us and our opinions is, that in such a congregationall government thus entire within it self, there is no allowed sufficient remedy for miscarriages...; no reliefe for wrongful sentences or persons injured thereby; no roome for complaints: no powerful or effectual means to reduce a Church or Churches that ful into heresie, schisme, &c. but every one is left and may take liberty without controule to do what is good in their own eyes....[2]

In an attempt to convince their Presbyterian neighbours of the orderliness of the Congregational economy, the dissenting brethren declared that they had wherewith to vindicate their way and then cited as evidence their dealings in the schism -- "the most solemne instance" of their practice -- at Rotterdam.

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also supra, 178.

1. Steuart, Some Observations, 46.

2. AN, 15f. Gillespie had complained that Congregational economy did not provide remedy for heresy within particular churches. He said: "without a subordination among Ecclesiastical Courts, and the authority of the higher above the inferior, it were utterly impossible to preserve unity, or to make an end of controversie in a Nation." See Gillespie, Assertion, 187.

There was a "scandall and offence" in their churches in exile. One of their churches, they said, had wrongly deposed their minister. This greatly "scandalized" the other church, who "judged it not onely as too suddaine an act... but also in the proceedings thereof as too severe, and not managed accordingly to the rules laid down in the word".

The church thus offended sent letters to "the Church offending", requiring them "to yeeld a full and publique hearing before all the Churches... offended" of why they had desposed their minister, and "to subject themselves to an open tryall and review of all those forepassed carriages". The church offending "readily" agreed.

Soon afterwards, "the Church offended" sent ministers, together with other "two Gentlemen, of much worth, wisdom and piety", as their "Messengers". When the "solemne assembly" began, an opening speech was delivered:

> "it was the most to be abhorred maxime... that a... particular society of men professing the name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a power from Christ to judge them that are of the same body... should further arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving account or being censurable by any other, either Christian Magistrate above them; or neighbour Churches about them."

After several days' public trial "afore all commers", the offending church eventually confessed their sins, restored their minister to his former post, and "ordered a solemn day of fasting to humble themselves afore God and men, for their sinfull carriage in it". And the minister, who had been deposed, also made his apology to the church "wherein he had likewise sinned".[1]

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1. AN, 16, 20f. For the details, see supra, 13f.

In citing the Rotterdam case, the dissenting brethren tried to show that Congregational economy was so far from the "independent liberty" that had been imputed to them,[1] and that it could manage a kind of "synod" for giving "advice and counsel", removing offences and reducing chaotic churches to order and unity.

The relationship between local church and synod, in the understanding of the Congregationals, was: 1) the local church was "primary" and the synod was "derived"; the latter was the extension of the former. 2) Both local church and synod were equal; the latter should not place itself above the former. 3) The synod was meant to advise, rather than order; while the local church was to be advised, rather than to be ordered. 4) The selfhood of a local church was in the "catholicity" of a synod.

Conclusion

The Congregationals stressed that the visible church is not a universal church with its outward organic unity, but a particular congregation. The reason why they stressed this was that they feared that a representative presbytery or synod would infringe the authority of Jesus Christ over a local congregation.[2]

To oppose the "extrinsical" Presbyterianism, the Congregationals advocated a kind of "intrinsical" presbyterianism. The local elders had an active power of rule, while the brethren had a passive power of concurrence only. This showed that the Congregationals were in favour of neither popular government nor sheer clericalism.

Manipulating the respective aspects of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' thoughts, the Presbyterians put their emphasis upon the jus divinum of a presbytery or synod, the descendendo nature of church courts, and the unity of the visible church; whereas the Congregationals, upon the jus divinum of a local presbytery, the ascendendo nature of church courts, and the paradox of "independence"

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1. AN, 21.

2. Supra, 16f, 118f; infra, 230.

and "unity".[1] In a word, the latter was in favour of lateral relationship between synod and local church; while the former, of a vertical hierarchy of synod and local church.

As we have seen, many ideas of the Congregationals had been embedded in the minds of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans, whose vague ideas were later crystallised by the New England theorists. Hence, it could be argued, English Congregationalism was the direct outgrowth of the early Stuart puritans' explicit congregationalism, which evolved from the Elizabethan puritans' implicit congregationalism. It was also the outcome of the New England propaganda.[2] Therefore it was nothing new for the Congregationals to assert that a local church had authority for government within itself, that elders and brethren in the local church must check and balance each other, and that a synod was only the extension of the local church.

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1. For the Congregationals, each particular congregation was independent only in the sense of having the final word in matters of discipline, not in the sense of having no duty to appeal to the synod of churches and thereby to maintain church unity.

2. For instance, statements concerning the Congregational system in the Apologeticall Narration owed a great deal to Cotton's The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England that gave a full description of New England ecclesial practice, and consequently became an exemplar to the English Congregationals.

CHAPTER FOUR

"THE PRIMITIVE PATTERNE" AND "THE FUTURE"

The previous two chapters -- chapter one and chapter three -- are now followed by this question: why did the dissenting brethren "hold forth this true and just Apologie unto the world, That in the matters of greatest moment and controversie", they "chose the better part" and preferred the "congregationall governement"?[1] To answer this question, we shall examine in some detail the dissenting brethren's first two principles in their Apologeticall Narration. Their first principle, they wrote, "was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles"; their second was "not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law unto our selves for the future".[2] The former was concerned with the biblical precedent; the latter, with the idea of "further light". These two are the keys to the above question. In accordance with these two principles, we propose to subdivide this chapter into two: I. Return to the Primitive Church; II. The Approaching Millennium and "Further Light".

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1. AN, 11, 15. This "true and just Apologie" is also their third principle that guided their church practice. See supra, 40.

2. AN, 9f.

I. Return to the Primitive Church

The dissenting brethren's first principle that the primitive church was the sacred "patterne" and "example" for all churches ensuing to follow was very much associated with the last word of the first book of the Institutes that Christians should "embrace... whatever is taught in Sacred Scripture",[3] which was characteristic of Calvinism. As indicated before, Calvin himself was essentially christocentric, yet his adherents in the late 16th century tended to be more and more legalistic.[4] This found expression particularly in their use of the Bible as the data of precedents.[5] Their effort was to discover the unchanged church pattern in the New Testament. This effort was especially made by the Elizabethan and Jacobean scriptural particularists in England, who engaged in a controversy with the anglicans over church discipline. It is only within this frame of reference that we can investigate the dissenting brethren's first principle. Hence our two sub-sections: A. The "Adiaphora Controversy": Puritan and Anglican Disagreements; B. Congregational Discipline, Biblically Prescribed.

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3. Inst., I, 18:4.

4. Cf. supra, 55f, 58; infra, 233-7.

5. George Yule, "Congregational Patterns and the Reformation in England and Scotland", Scottish Journal of Theology, XX (1965), 309ff. Calvinism differed from Lutheranism in that the latter stressed the gospel and neglected the scriptural details regarding church order and liturgy, while the former thought much of these details and regarded them as types for every aspect of life, both civil and ecclesiastical. Cf. LAL, 39.

A. The "Adiaphora Controversy": Puritan and Anglican Disagreements

As the counterpart of the "adiaphora controversy" on the Continent,[6] the "adiaphora controversy" in England was initially known as the "vestiarian controversy" between puritans and anglicans, which eventually escalated into a controversy over church discipline manifesting itself mainly in the disagreements of both puritans and anglicans about the biblical authority, the ecclesiastical tradition, and the use of reason.

1. The disagreement about biblical authority

The English version of adiaphorism, worked out by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of the Henrician and Edwardian Church, and later defended by John Whitgift, grew from the sharp distinction between matters of faith and morals, which were laid down explicitly by Scripture, and matters of church order and ceremonies, which were not biblically prescribed. The former were held to be essential to salvation and therefore must be observed, while the latter were deemed to be merely accidental to salvation and therefore "indifferent" and "left to the discretion of the church".[7] In brief, Scripture was sufficient for salvation, but not all-sufficient for every detail of religion; herein

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6. The "adiaphora controversy" on the Continent took place between 1548 and 1577. During the controversy, Melanchthon held to be adiaphora ("things indifferent") for the sake of peace certain Catholic practices, for example, the elevation of the Host, that are neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture. This view was, however, fiercely opposed by Matthias Flacius, who pinpointed the danger of compromise. Cf. New Dictionary of Theology, eds. S.B. Ferguson & D.F. Wright (1980), s.v., "Adiaphora".

7. The Work of Thomas Cranmer, ed. G.E. Duffield (Appleford, 1964), xxii-xxiii; The Works of John Whitgift, I, 175f, 181-5, 189, 191, 200f, 207, 213, 243-7, 256.

lies what Professor Collinson terms "the corner-stone of Anglicanism".[8] According to anglicans, there was no need to ground things indifferent on a scriptural paradigm.

The anglican view of biblical authority was simply unacceptable to the "precisians",[9] who firmly believed that the Holy Writ had precisely laid down not merely faith, but every detail of church order as well.[10] As regards the latter, Thomas Cartwright argued that the Almighty, Who had "made provision for the tabernacle and the temple even to the pins, snuffers and besoms", was sure to prescribe with equal care in His Word the specifications for the church of the new dispensation.[11] The Jacobean puritans insisted that Scripture was all-sufficient in that it was concerned not only with "all matters of Religion [faith]", but with all matters of "the worship and seruice of God" as well.[12] Furthermore, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans were both convinced that the church pattern which God had prescribed amounted to a perpetual law for all generations and all countries to

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8. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, 27.

9. By "precisians" was meant those who were rigidly precise or punctilious in religious observance. It was another name for "puritans". See Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, ed. Matthew Sylvester (1696), 8.

10. The Works of John Whitgift, I, 180f.

11. Pearson, Thomas Cartwright, 90. See also Travers, op. cit., 7f.

12. Jacob, Confession, sigs. A6v-A7r; William Bradshaw, English Pvritanisme (n.p., 1605), 1. For Jacobean puritans, matters of worship were "not indifferent". See Jacob, op. cit., sig. A7r.

follow.[13] That is to say, it was entirely along this "one line throughout all countries, and at all times" that church polity must be constructed.[14]

Clearly puritans and anglicans differed from one another in their views of Scripture. Although they both paid reverence to its authority, yet the puritans (radical biblicists) argued that Christians should do only what Scripture explicitly commanded, whereas the anglicans (moderate humanists) emphasised rather that Christians should not do what Scripture explicitly prohibited. The difference is subtle but profound.[15]

2. The disagreement about ecclesiastical tradition

Anglicans may have said "yes" to the celebrated aphorism of the anglican theologian, William Chillingworth (d.1644): "The BIBLE, I say, The BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants!"[16] But did "the BIBLE only" forbid any freer use of extra-biblical sources, say, patristic sources, in theological speculations? Cranmer who used the ancient Fathers widely in his writings showed little inclination to derive the Prayer Book liturgy exclusively from Scripture. As a matter

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13. Travers, op. cit., 9: "I affirme that Christ hath lefte us so parfecte [sic] a rule and Discipline... which is common and generall to all the church/ and perpetuall for all tymes." See also Jacob, Reasons Taken ovt of Gods Word, 70: "The ordinary forme of Church governement set forth vnto vs in the New Testament, ought to be kept still by vs: it is not changeable by men, and therefore it only is lawfull."

14. Puritan Manifestoes, 95.

15. The Works of John Whitgift, I, 192ff, 200f, 236; New, Anglican and Puritan, 28.

16. William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants A Safe VVay to Salvation (Oxford, 1638), 375.

of fact, the arch-adiaphorist still showed loyalty to the traditions of rites and orders developed during the first five centuries before the Roman apostasy, because he firmly believed that there was a continuity between the apostles' times and the following ages. As a result, the reverence for the "old holy doctors" and the appeal to patristic precedents were rapidly becoming what Theodore Bozeman terms "a keystone of Anglican utterance".[17] As Richard Hooker wrote:

> the authority of man [the Fathers] is... the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture. The Scripture could not teach us the things that are of God, unless we did credit men who have taught us that the words of Scripture do signify those things.[18]

The puritans dissented from the anglicans in their attitude toward the ancient post-apostolic church. In their opinion, the "virgin" church began to defile "the mariage bed" and her "first love... waxed cold" right after the New Testament times. Hence the church in the patristic era, though relatively pure by the standard of the church in later ages, was relatively impure when compared with the apostolic church -- the "first", "best", and "perfectest church" in Christian history. The first must be the best; the best must be the first. As Cartwright wrote tersely: "That is true/ whatsoever is first/ and that is false, whatsoever is latter," because "the elder they are, the further they are from corruption."[19]

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17. LAL, 24f, 30.

18. Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1907), II, 7:3.

19. Thomas Brightman, A Revelation of the Apocalypse (Amsterdam, 1611), 45; Cartwright, Replye, 104; Cartwrightiana, 114; LAL, 27f.

While the anglicans accepted the guidance of the early Fathers, "the men of the Book" rejected it by proclaiming, on the basis of the "golden text" (Rev 22:18), that "Gods truthe nedyth not mans auctoryte."[20]

3. The disagreement about the use of reason

In Reformed theology, man's natural faculty or reason had been totally depraved since the Fall. This typically "Reformed" utterance was toned down a great deal by Richard Hooker's characteristically "anglican" theology. Following the Thomistic view of grace not supplanting but perfecting nature, "the father of anglicanism" justified the use of reason in religion by affirming that man's reason, though handicapped, is not utterly damaged by the Fall.[21] Hence, in his opinion, matters of church polity and ceremonies, for which no sacred pattern was given, could be laid down in the light of reason. As it was stated in The Thirty-Nine Articles that the church "hath aucthoritie to ordaine, chaunge, and abolishe" ceremonial adiaphora, provided reason, expedience, and decency were considered and "Gods worde" was not opposed.[22]

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20. Anthony Gilby, To My Lovynge Brethren That Is Troubled about the Popishe Aparrel (n.p., 1566), sig. Biii; quoted in LAL, 27.

21. Hooker, Of the Laws, III, 8; V, Appendix I; LAL, 60; New, Anglican and Puritan, 6. For Thomistic view of nature, see Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, Ia q1 a8.

22. Hooker, Of the Laws, III, 8:18-9:3; The Thirty-Nine Articles (1571), arts. 10, 34, in The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources, eds. G.R. Evans & J.R. Wright (1991), 164, 169f; LAL, 59, 62.

By the use of reason in religion, the gentle and "judicious" Hooker meant that the church must make an active rational analysis of the current needs according to "general revelation". He pointed out that divine laws are always relative to the "temporary" social, historical and other conditions. It was absurd to claim that biblical incidentals were "immutable" in all ages. In fact, he reasoned, these things are "changeable according to the difference of times, places, persons, and other the like circumstances". For instance, the Genevan discipline was an accommodation to that city republic. Therefore it was not necessary to imitate every detail of the New Testament church.[23]

If the anglicans could be said to extend the compass of reason towards the things of God, then the puritans could be said to limit it. In demanding direct biblical warrant, not only for faith and order, but also for every act of daily life, the puritans, to some extent, deprecated reason, for they feared that reason in theology would eventually change from minister to magister. As a result, they resorted to the New Testament archetypes, which they regarded as fixed, perfect and all-sufficient, capable of being paradigmatic for the church in later eras. These archetypes were not relative to times, places, and other circumstances, because "the faith," they believed, "was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 4), and God and His Church are "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb 13:8), the same as they were from the very beginning.[24]

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23. Hooker, Of the Laws, A Preface: 2:1-2,4; III, 10:1-2,5-8; 11:13; LAL, 62f.

24. LAL, 17, 20, 56, 64, 110.

Now we have seen the contrast between the puritan exclusive appeal to the Bible and the anglican threefold appeal to the Bible, the Fathers, and reason. The anglicans' adiaphoral theory resulted in their emphasis on the doctrine of incarnation (the accommodation of grace to nature), while the puritans' rejection of it swung to the polarisation of biblical precedents and current circumstances (the confrontation between grace and nature).[25]

B. Congregational Discipline, Biblically Prescribed

Having treated the puritan view of the Bible, we shall now discuss the dissenting brethren's first principle. The first principle, they stated, "was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles. Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures".[26] From this principle derived the dissenting brethren's deprecation of human tradition and reason. In order to make this sub-section correspond to the previous one, we shall arrange it in the following order: 1. The Bible -- a "law-book";[27] 2. The apostolic church -- infallible; 3. Reason -- a "handmaid".

1. The Bible -- a "law-book"

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25. It must be added here that the puritans' rejection of the adiaphoral theory was not without reason. As it was, the puritans feared that, if "things indifferent" were established, it would eventually occur that the word of man became more important than the Word of God. As Cartwright expressed his worry: human tradition would provide a means "whereby a gate is open unto the papistes to bring in/ under the coloure of traditions/ all their beggary whatsoever." See Cartwright, Replye, 18.

26. AN, 9. Italics mine.

27. Troeltsch, The Social Teaching, I, 347, 360.

The dissenting brethren's general concept of the Bible was that the Bible is "the Epistle that God hath sent into the world", and in which "he hath made known the counsell of his will, and opened even his very heart unto Mankind."[28] In this divine epistle, "there is... a compleat sufficiencie, as to make the man of God perfect, so also to make the Churches of God perfect [2 Tim 1:13,16]."[29] By "a compleat sufficiencie", the dissenting brethren meant none other than a sufficiency of rules and principles. As they stated:

> And the observation of so many of those particulars to be laid forth in the Word, became to us a more certaine evidence and cleare confirmation that there were the like rules and rules cases for all occasions whatsoever, if we were able to discern them.[30]

Henry Burton shared the dissenting brethren's view, when he said: "of Divinitie, the Rules and Principles whereof, are all of them laid downe in the Scripture, unto which alone all Questions about Faith and Religion are so reducible, and finally determinable."[31] In this view, the Bible was looked upon as what Ames had called "a sufficient rule of Faith and manners. 2 Pet. 1.19.20".[32] Only by using this "onely Rule of Reformation" were they able to halt the advance of Antichrist.[33]

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28. Burroughes, An Exposition of the Prophesie of Hosea, I, 2f.

29. AN, 9. Italics mine. Cf. [Burton], Christ on His Throne, 13.

30. AN, 10. Italics mine. They actually meant that men were able to find in Scripture "a compleat sufficiencie... if" they "fully" knew and "followed" "the directions and examples therein delivered". See AN, 9. In the Apologeticall Narration, words like "rules", "principles", "directions", "rules cases", such as "pattern and examples", have similar meaning.

31. Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 3.

32. Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, II, 5:30.

33. Simpson, Reformation's Preservation, 27.

The dissenting brethren believed that "rules, principles... directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches" were all "recorded in the New Testament". That is to say, church discipline was already prescribed in detail in the New Testament. So they declared: "we found principles enough, not onely fundamentall and essential to the being of a Church, but superstructory also for the wel-being of it, and those to us cleare and certaine."[34] Similar utterances are to be found elsewhere in the dissenting brethren's writings. For instance, Goodwin asserted that "there is certainly a right Rule... chalked out for every administration in Gods Sanctuary, if we could find it out."[35] Likewise, Bridge wrote: "take the right line into your hands. God's word it is our line, able to reach unto all particular affairs of the churches."[36]

Actually many "Presbyterians" were also convinced "that there is in the Word of God, an exact forme of Government set downe."[37] That is why, when the Westminster Assembly was convened to discuss the form of church government, the English approach clashed with the Scottish one. The latter argued that there was a pattern for a hierarchy of sessions, presbyteries, synods and general assemblies; the former contended rather that there was a pattern for each local congregation, but none for hierarchical system.[38] The debate at the Westminster

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34. AN, 3, 10.

35. ZE, 34. Italics mine.

36. Bridge, "On Zechariah... preached before the Honourable House of Commons, at their Public Fast, November 29, 1643", WWB, IV, 339.

37. Smectymnuus, An Answer to a Book, 60f.

38. Yule, "Congregational Patterns and the Reformation in England and Scotland", Scottish Journal of Theology, XX, 321.

Assembly was in effect a debate between Scripturalists and Scripturalists; for both, by providing themselves respectively with innumerable proof texts, believed that there was a true, exclusive and universally binding model of a Christian Church.[39]

Being a "law-book" -- a legal document in which each sentence was on the same footing and could be equally used to prove a given case -- the Bible seemed to be treated as a new law, rather than gospel.[40]

2. The apostolic church -- infallible

a. Apostolic and apostatic

The italic term "Apostolique infallibility" in the Apologeticall Narration conveys the meaning that the apostles were infallible in their judgments and "directions". Seeing that the apostles were infallible, the church they "erected" must be "compleat", "perfect", and inerrant. Hence the dissenting brethren proclaimed that they tried "to search out what were the first Apostolique directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament". They took "the first Apostolique directions" and the primitive church "pattern and examples" as the "sacred pillar of fire to guide us".[41]

Why did the dissenting brethren yearn so much for the primitive church? This yearning was probably caused by their lament for the increasing apostasy after the apostles' times, which had begun with "the mystery of iniquity". As Burton wrote:

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39. JLJ, 21.

40. Supra, 194.

41. AN, 3, 9, 22.

> the Government of Arch-Bishops and Diocesan Bishops... was even from the wel-head corrupted, as being an huma[n] device, and the first spring of the Mistery of iniquity which the further it run, the more corrupt it grew, till it had its full confluence in muddy Tiber, the See of Rome, by whose innundation Antichrist, having hoysed up his mainesailes, could easily compasse in the whole Easterne Christian World.[42]

In comparison with the later institutional church, the church planted by the apostles themselves was much more attractive. It was attractive in that it was a "lively" brotherhood as was described in Psalm 133, and in that it was under the infallible, vigilant and charismatic leadership of the apostles who were so "watchfull and zealous" as not to suffer any error to creep into it.[43]

b. "God's institution" and "men's inventions"

The dissenting brethren believed that the primitive church was the divinely instituted original, and any move beyond it involved some humanly invented addition, and thereby shared some sort of darkness. So in their inquiry into "the light part, the positive part of Church-worship and Government", they preferred to consult the Word of Christ in the New Testament rather than consult the fallible word of man. Thus they declared that "in this enquirie, we lookt upon the word of Christ as impartially, and unprejudicely, as men made of flesh and blood are like to doe in any juncture of time that may fall out."[44]

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42. Burton, The Protestation Protested, sigs. B2r-v. Burton added afterwards that "the mystery of iniquity began to worke even in the Apostles own times." It expressed itself mainly "in the affection of Primacy [3 Jn 9]". See Burton, Vindication, 23.

43. Burton, Vindication, 47; Cotton, A Modest and Clear Answer, 46.

44. AN, 3, 5. Italics mine.

Even the recent example -- the New England way -- they did not blindly follow, but examined and considered in the light of the Word of God. They put it clearly:

> And yet we still stood as unengaged spectators, free to examine and consider what truth is to be found in and amongst all these... and this nakedly according to the word; We resolved not to take up our Religion by or from any partie, and yet to approve and hold fast whatsoever is good in any, though never so much differing from us, yea opposite unto us.[45]

The dissenting brethren actually made known their strategy for the reformation of the church, as clearly announced by one of them, Sidrach Simpson, who preached at Westminster before the House of Commons that what was required for reformation was "to have them [the churches] pure, and after Gods prescript, without humane addition or alteration". He then demanded that this should be a rule that "the more plain Gods ordinances are, the more powerfull; the more there is of man, the less there is of God in them."[46]

c. Reformation plus restitution

The "supreame rule" of the Congregationals, as the dissenting brethren said, was "the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles". This "supreame rule" reminds us of the Anabaptists' dominant concern for "restitution".[47] Did the Congregationals advocate restitution as had done the Anabaptists, or

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45. AN, 5.

46. Simpson, Reformation's Preservation, 4.

47. The Anabaptists, deploring the 1500-year church deformation, sought to recapitulate the purified church life of the golden age of the Faith by establishing a gathered and disciplined church on the apostolic platform. In essence, they tried to shorten the distance between their own age and the primordial age. Cf. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers, 56f.

reformation, as had done the classical Reformers? As a matter of fact, the Congregationals, like the Separatists, always blurred distinctions between restitution and reformation.[48]

The Congregationals' unclear stand can be observed especially in Burton's writings. He wrote that the Church of England "hath been so universally overspread with profanenesse, and darknesse" that it "will be very difficult... to [re]constitute it so, as is agreeable in all points to a true and visible Congregation of Christ". Therefore it was highly necessary for reformation to begin by "the new forming of a Church, such as God requireth in his word", namely, by gathering anew "all those into severall Congregations, who are fitted, and who desire to draw neere unto Christ in a holy Communion with him in the purity of his Ordinances" (the Separatist solution).[49] But this, added Burton, could be done within a parish circle (the "parochial" Congregational solution). He said that the godly parish ministers might

> reforme their owne Congregations, and take away all such scandalls, and separate the precious from the vile... and administer the Ordinances of Christ purely and holily, and set up Christs government in their Congregations, that so they may retaine those honest soules, which otherwise are forced to forsake the pudled streames, to injoy the sweet, fresh, and pure

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48. Separatists, in the person of Johnson, asserted that "the people of God, which are called and come out of Babylon, need not a nevv plantation of a church, but a reformation onely. In which respect, the tearme of the Reformed churches is very fit and godly." Then he condemned the Anabaptist efforts to "begin [church] anew" as "exceedingly sinfull and erroneous". See Johnson, Plea, 137. However they sometimes tried to recapitulate the apostolic church rather than reform the old historical church. See supra, 95-8.

49. Burton, Protestation, sigs. B3r-v. Burton explained "the new forming of a Church" as this: "we should doe as the Apostles did when they came to plant Churches in a Country where the Gospell had not been formerly preached. First they taught the people, and then those which heard and beleeved, were formed into a Church or Congregation." See ibid.

fountaine of living waters.[50]

The Congregational stand could be summarised as this: on the one hand they attempted, in the words of Philip Schaff, to "build a new church from the Bible" (restitutio) and on the other aimed to "reform the old Church by the Bible" (reformatio).[51]

3. Reason -- a "handmaid"

The dissenting brethren declared in the Apologeticall Narration that "meere circumstances we except [against], or what rules the law of nature doth in common dictate."[52] That is to say, they took exception to such an adiaphoral claim that the church could lay down its polity merely according to the "circumstances", or could change its polity according to the "rules" which "the law of nature" (reason) commonly dictated or enjoined. To come to the point, church polity hinged upon neither circumstances nor reason. Another statement also shows that the dissenting brethren objected to the use of reason in matters of religion. They stated that they were

> not daring to eeke out what was defective in our light in matters Divine with humane prudence [reason] (the fatall errour to Reformation) lest by sowing any piece of the old garment unto the new, we should make the rent worse....[53]

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50. Ibid., sigs. C2r-v. Italics mine. This was true of the Congregationals, who took over the parish churches and remedied them in their own image in the next two decades. See VS, 134f. See also infra, 274f.

51. Quoted in Avis, op. cit., 56.

52. AN, 9.

53. AN, 10.

Here they deprecated reason by comparing it to a "piece of the old garment unto the new [cloth]".[54]

Why did the dissenting brethren "except [against]... circumstances" and the natural "law" or reason in their thinking about church order? First, they believed that the first four commandments had laid down church order and worship, and therefore for the church to change this prescribed order by reason of the changing circumstances was actually a subtraction of three of these four from the Ten Commandments. As Bridge stated:

> If you mean that all circumstances are left unto the church, then you do at once... cut off three commandments from the decalogue; the first commandment... commandeth the substance of worship, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time; and means, manner, and time are circumstances.[55]

Second, they believed that the apostles had prescribed a unified church order that was independent of the contemporary laws and customs and difference of places. As Burton put it:

> we are not able to produce our Charter out of the Magna Charta, the Scripture. And this, brother, not you, nor any man can do. Again, nothing is more presumptuous, then to attempt to mingle heaven & earth together.... Did they [the apostles] frame Christs Kingdom & Church-government to the laws and customes of the Romane Empire? Or did they vary their orders for Church-government & Discipline, according to the different manners and customes of those Nations, countreys or Provinces where they planted their Churches? Had they one order for the Church of Corinth, and another for the Churches of Galatia, and a third for the Churches of Asia and the rest? No: But so ordain I in all Churches, saith the Apostle [1 Cor 7:17]. And concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye [1 Cor 16:1].[56]

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54. This is a wrong citation. It should be corrected as "a piece of new cloth unto an old garment". See Matthew 9:16.

55. Bridge, "On Zechariah", WWB, IV, 340.

56. Burton, Vindication, 9. For the similar thoughts, see Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 90, in which the Congregational way was said to "suit all Churches, all States, [and] all Times".

Since both Old and New Testaments had prescribed church order, circumstances and reason must yield to the authority of Scripture and must not go beyond it.

It must be noted here that the dissenting brethren's effort to limit reason did not necessarily mean that they rejected it. In effect, they used reason, but they used it as a "handmaid". As Bridge said: "Though there be a good use of reason even in the things of God, yet reason is but the drawer of water, an handmaid."[57] This "handmaid" referred possibly to the logic of Petrus Ramus, a Huguenot martyr, which had proved a useful tool for the Congregationals in organising and analysing biblical doctrine by means of precise definitions, dichotomies, outline charts, etc. Not being a method of inquiry, this new logic did not allow human intellect to go beyond the biblically given and fixed truths.[58] The taste of the Congregationals for an exact and legalistic interpretation of Scripture, to some extent, paved the way for the later Princeton school represented by Charles Hodge.

II. The Approaching Millennium and "Further Light"

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren revealed their obsession with eschatology by arguing that the light of the truth, that is, the light of Congregational discipline, was progressively

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57. Bridge, "Scripture Light the Most Sure Light", WWB, I, 435.

58. LAL, 68. See also Morgan, Godly Learning, 111f, 236; Miller, The New England Mind, 144, 166, 300-30, 493ff.

unfolded.[1] For "the Independent divines' concept of the church," as Tai Liu points out, "was deeply colored by their eschatological vision of the coming Kingdom of Christ."[2] In order to grasp their "further light" argument, we must, first of all, investigate their eschatology. Hence our arrangement of this section in the following order: A. Millennialism in Vogue; B. The Congregationals' Calculation of "the World to Come"; C. "Congregationall Governement" -- A "Further Light".

A. Millennialism in Vogue

The overwhelming majority of Elizabethan and early Stuart puritans, like the 16th-century Reformers, believed only in a modified or Protestant version of Augustinian amillennialism, the imminent Second Coming of Christ and a heavenly New Jerusalem.[3] This classical Protestant eschatology stressed the point that Christ "remaines in the heaven unto the last Judgement"; in other words, Christ "comes not downe to the earth a thousand yeares before the last Judgement".[4] The

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1. The association of the progressive unfolding of the light with eschatology is to be well observed in ZE, 13: "the Spirit... dispelling the darknesse... by light shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day, which is the brightnesse of Christs comming, as 2 Thes. 2.8."

2. Tai Liu, Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640-60 (The Hague, 1973), 34.

3. LAL, 214; MWD, 129; CS, 78. According to St Augustine, the millennium (Rev 20:1-6) symbolised the entire age of the church, from the resurrection of Christ to His parousia. This view was later modified by the Reformers, who literally interpreted it as a period in the past, say, from 300 to 1300. For the future, they expected the imminent Second Coming leading up to Judgment and then to the heavenly New Jerusalem. See New Dictionary of Theology, s.v. "Millennium". By and large, the puritans adhered to the Reformers' view and denied the possibility that the New Jerusalem -- a "utopia" in human history -- would be set up in this world. See LAL, 203n; DP, 331; CS, 102.

4. Diss., 225.

primary preoccupation of the Elizabethan and early Stuart puritans, as Theodore Bozeman sees it, was not with the future "millennium", but with the past "primordium", that is, the primordial discipline of the church.[1] It was not until the crisis in Scotland beginning in 1637 was intensified that Congregationals in New England and some puritan exiles in Holland began to attach importance to the approaching Millennium as explored by Thomas Brightman (d.1607) and Joseph Mede (d.1638) a decade ago, and reinterpret Revelation 20:1-6 in terms of a future earthly reign of Christ.[2]

The first English Protestant to set eschatology in the millennial format is Thomas Brightman, Fellow of Queen's College in Cambridge. He significantly transformed the accepted Augustinian amillennialism by postulating two millennia. The first millennium, he restated what modified Augustinians had said, had begun with Constantine and ran on to about 1300. The second, though still hidden, he argued, had begun with Wycliffe[3] and would be revealed fully around 1650 by the intermediate advent of Christ (not a personal appearance of Christ, but an efflux of his "brightness") that would destroy Antichrist and

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1. LAL, 193, 223-6. Based on Foxe's panorama of church history, Acts and Monuments, the puritans believed that the tenets of primitive Christianity (the initial light of the gospel), eclipsed by the later Roman apostasy, had been recovered, for the first time since the halcyon days of the primitive church, by Wycliffe/Huss and the Reformers. This indicated that the age-long cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan would soon be ended by a sudden return of the Lord, followed by the doomsday, when those who followed the biblical light, namely, primitive Christian belief and discipline, would be rewarded while those who failed to do so would be punished. See CS, 79ff, 86, 89, 92f, 104f; LAL, 201.

2. Cf. LAL, 217.

3. Based on Revelation 14, Brightman called Wycliffe the first angel, Huss and Jerome of Prague, the second, and Luther, the third. See Brightman, A Revelation of the Apocalypse, sig. B2r, 396-401.

then, in 1700, usher in 600-year ecumenical peace and "felicity", in the wake of which would follow the "second coming" of Christ for the final judgement and the translation of the New Jerusalem "from earth into heaven".[1] Brightman's postmillennialism was followed by Joseph Mede's premillennialism or chiliasm.[2] Mede, Fellow of Christ's College in Cambridge, maintained that the brightness of Christ's coming, which he identified with the second advent, would resurrect the saints, "destroy all the enemies of his Church", and inaugurate the millennial period; although he was still far from dogmatically asserting the earthly reign of Christ.[3] This interpretation was epochal in its repudiation of the Augustinian theory.

The Scottish revolt in the late 1630s caused Brightman's and Mede's millennial "heresy" to enter the agenda of the teachings of Thomas Goodwin and John Archer[4] at Arnhem, who were strongly motivated to reconsider eschatological conventions while they were in Holland

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1. Ibid., sigs. A3v, B2r, 209, 212f, 447, 626, 634, 678, 680, 704f; LAL, 207-10; MWD, 130; CS, 85.

2. Toon (ed.), Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel, 62. Premillennialism and postmillennialism differed from each other in that the former expected the personal advent of Christ and the literal resurrection of the saints to herald the millennial era, at the end of which there would be the third advent of Christ, the second resurrection of the wicked and the last judgment, while the latter expected rather the spiritual intervention of Christ in the power of the Spirit and spiritual resurrection of the true faith to usher in the millennial age, which would be followed by the bodily resurrection of all mankind before the second coming and the doomsday. Cf. New Dictionary of Theology, s.v. "Millennium"; Toon (ed.), op. cit., 36.

3. The Works of Joseph Mede (1672), 603ff, 772. Cf. Diss., 224, 227.

4. John Archer (d.1642) was suspended from the pulpit of Allhallows, Lombard Street, London in 1631. Six years later, he went into exile in Holland. See BDBR. He was what the dissenting brethren called one of "our fellow labourers in the Gospel". See AN, 22. See also Anta., 187.

where they could have access to Brightman's and Mede's apocalyptic works in manuscripts.[1] As a result, there were produced three apocalyptic works in Holland: Goodwin's The Exposition... on the Book of Revelation,[2] and his A Glimpse of Sions Glory, and Archer's The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth -- on all of which Brightman and Mede had a profound influence. The Revolution and the Civil War in England, however, further created the conditions for the flowering of millennial thought in both Old and New England.[3] It was only with the advent of that extraordinary period that the views of Brightman and Mede were able to circulate freely; and it was only then that people were eager to investigate the details of millennial concepts.[4] Millennialism became so popular that even some of the English Presbyterian divines professed their millennial persuasion.[5] By the end of the 1640s, in the calculation of Hugo Grotius (d.1645), "father of international law", there had been published in England as many as

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1. LAL, 216. Before 1640, Brightman's and Mede's works were not widely available in England because of the severe censorship of the Laudian regime; neither were their novel ideas rapidly assimilated by the puritan thinkers. Cf. LAL, 210f, 215f.

2. Goodwin's On Revelation was said by his son to have been composed in 1639. See WTG, II, "A Preface to the Reader".

3. New England millennialism emerged in chronological parallel with the similar development in both Holland and England. See LAL, 221, 229.

4. LAL, 217; Christopher Hill, Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England (Oxford, 1971), 27; B.C. Capp, The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-century English Millenarianism (1972), 30, 36f. Norman Cohn remarks that "at times of general uncertainty or excitement people were always apt to turn to the Book of Revelation and the innumerable commentaries upon it." See Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium (1957), 15.

5. Baillie, whose eschatological view was orthodox, expressed his amazement in 1645 at the popularity of millennial views among "the most of the chiefe divines... such as Twiss, Marshall, Palmer, and many more". See LJ, II, 313.

80 books expounding the Millennium.[1] Hence the entire 1640s could be termed "the decade of millennial fever".

In closing, it must be borne in mind that the new doctrine of the Millennium differed from traditional Protestant amillennialism in its dual emphasis on both Christ's threefold advent and "the world to come" (Heb 2:5).[2]

B. The Congregationals' Calculation of "the World to Come"

The dissenting brethren who embraced the "further light" theory were sure that they were in the "latter-days". But how did they reach that conclusion? This question should be answered by investigating Archer's and Goodwin's calculation of the coming Kingdom.

The apocalyptic works by Archer and Goodwin made an important contribution to the wave of millennial expectation that swept England in the 1640s. They produced the Congregationals' most detailed expositions of the belief in the coming Millennium. Basing his thesis upon Daniel 7, Archer interpreted the vision of "four great beasts", among which the fourth had "ten horns" and another "little horn", in terms of the rise and fall of the four "Monarchies", Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman. In his "historicist" exegesis of the biblical prophecies,[3] "Ten Hornes" reprensented "ten Kingdomes, which

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1. VS, 157.

2. The three advents refer to 1) the Incarnation; 2) the "comming in the brightness"; and 3) the "Second Coming unto Judgement". "The world to come" did not mean Heaven but the earth over which Christ would reign. See [Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory, passim; Gooodwin, "On Ephesians", WTG, I, 445.

3. "Historicist" exegesis tries to discover in Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation a continuous prophecy of the course of world and church history from the period of Babylonian rule or from the birth of the church to the End. It usually adopts the

arose out of the Westerne Roman Monarchie", and the "little Horne" symbolised Antichrist, i.e., "the Papacie", which would "prevaile over the holy people and Saints of God" for "a time, times, and an halfe" (1,260 years). Archer calculated that the papacy started with 406, when Antichrist began his 1260-year persecution of the true church, "the woman in the wilderness" (Rev 12:6), at the close of which, that is, 1666 -- "the time made the number of the Beast" (Rev 13:18), Rome, the "seate of the Beast", would "ruine by Fire" (Rev 18).[1] After that, Christ would "bring in a pure state of Churches, and yet Christ not to come and begin the thousand yeares, till 1700".[2] Archer's above calculation was, however, followed by Thomas Goodwin.[3]

None the less, for Goodwin, 1666 was the year when Antichrist's power would reach its climax, and "the two witnesses" (Rev 11) presently representing Congregational churches in England would be persecuted and slaughtered. After 1666, the witnesses would be resurrected ("the first resurrection" mentioned in Revelation 20:5-6) and "called up to heaven in a cloud" (Rev 11:11-12), which symbolised the entry of the Congregational churches into "a more honourable and glorious condition". This resurrection and ascension would be a

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year-day principle (Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6) and interprets a prophetic day as a literal year. As Goodwin calculated: "a time, times, and an half" = "three days and an half" (360 x 3 + 180) = 42 months (30 x 42) = 1,260 days = 1,260 years. See Goodwin, On Revelation, 632. The historicist analysis is distinguished from the "preterist" and "futurist" ones which interpret the biblical prophetic events as either past or future things.

1. Interestingly enough, it was not St Peter's at Rome, but St Paul's at London that was destroyed by the "Great Fire" of London in 1666!

2. Archer, The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth, 42-7, 49, 53ff.

3. Goodwin, On Revelation, 603, 633.

signpost to the "New Jerusalem", that is, "the final restitution of the church's liberation from under the yoke of Antichrist". Following this spiritual resurrection of the true churches would be the destruction of the papacy and then the commencement of "the fifth monarchy" that would last as long as "a Thousand yeeres", during which King Jesus, together with the saints, "shall reign vpon the Earth". All these events would take place between 1650 and 1695.[1]

Clearly it was the assumption that the 1,260 prophetic days, in which the "two witnesses" were mourning "in sackcloth" while "the Pope and his clergy are triumphing in their silk,"[2] was about to expire in 1666 that made the dissenting brethren feel strongly that they were living in the last hours. That is why Dr Nuttall puts it that "unless in some measure we do appreciate their eschatology, their piety... will be but dark to us."[3]

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1. Ibid., 631, 648, 650, 662, 666f, 673; [Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory, 13f, 32. Unlike Archer, who asserted the personal return of Christ, the resurrection of the saints, and Christ's reign on earth for a thousand years (see Archer, op. cit., 20-3, 34-7, 53), Goodwin made no mention of Christ's descending from above, nor a bodily resurrection of the saints previous to the Millennium, except a spiritual resurrection of the true churches; and by Christ's earthly reign, he actually meant the saints' reign on earth. As he later explained: "I do not say that Christ himself shall come down from heaven to reign here on earth; but let it be understood that Christ shall still remain in heaven... where he shall reign both over this world and the world to come." See Goodwin, "The World to come", The Works of Thomas Goodwin, ed. J.C. Miller (Edinburgh, 1861), XII, 96. Seen in this light, Goodwin seemed to be a postmillennialist, because he emphasised the continuity between the present and the millennial age.

2. Goodwin, On Revelation, 642.

3. VS, 158.

C. "Congregationall Governement" -- A "Further Light"

"Further light" is an eschatological term, while "congregationall governement" is an ecclesiological one. Both are to be found in the Apologeticall Narration. What is the relationship between "congregationall governement" and "further light", between ecclesiology and eschatology? The discussion of this question will make for the understanding of why the dissenting brethren took Congregational discipline so seriously. The following are our two headings for discussion: 1. "Further light" in the thought of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans; 2. Congregational discipline -- a latter-day light.

1. "Further light" in the thought of the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans

Before discussing the details of the dissenting brethren's argument, we must examine the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans' thinking on "further light".

The "further light" argument is naturally reminiscent of John Robinson's famous farewell address to the Plymouth-bound "Pilgrim Fathers" at Delftshaven, Holland, in 1620:

> Brethren... I charge you before God, and before his Blessed Angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> If God reveal any thing to you by any other Instrument of his, be as ready to receive it, as ever you were to receive any Truth by my Ministry; for... I am very confident the Lord hath more Truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the Condition of the Reformed Churches, who... will go... no further than the Instruments of their first Reformation. The Lutherans can't be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw... the Calvinists... stick fast where they were left by that great Man of God, who yet saw not all things.
>
> This is a Misery much to be lamented; for tho' they were Burning and Shining Lights in their Times, yet they penetrated not into the whole Counsel of God; but were they now living, they

would be as willing to embrace further Light, as that which they first received. ... For it is not possible the Christian World should come so lately out of such thick Antichristian Darkness, and that Perfection of Knowledge should break forth at once.[1]

But this argument, though immortalised by this godly pastor, had actually been a popular idea among the radical Protestants, who would not accept even the pronouncements of the great Reformers as final.

The argument was employed by Cartwright, who argued that although Luther and other first-generation Reformers

were excellent personnages [sic]/ yet their knowledge was in part/ & although they brought many things to our light/ yet they being sent out in the morning/ [bef]or[e] ever the sunne of the gospell was rysen so Hygh/ might ouersee many things.[2]

Following Cartwright, Henry Jacob also invoked the argument a decade earlier than Robinson did. Jacob was convinced that God "in this latter age" had already commenced a gradual overthrow of Antichrist through His instruments like Luther, Zwingli, Farell, Beza, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, all of whom Jacob regarded as "noble lights of Religion". While recognising these stars of the reformation, Jacob nevertheless believed that some of them had erred in "matter[s]

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1. Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, I, 14.

2. Cartwright, Replye, 196. A similar statement is to be found in the apology of Richard Greenham (d.1594) to Richard Cox, the Bishop of Ely: "I forbeare thinges vnnecessarie to satisfie my co[n]science. But one may say: Mai. Luther, the father of religion thought it was good that such thinges should be retayned, I... aunswere, that... Luther was... a chosen instrument of God. But... Luther did not see all things. I reuerence more the reuealed wisedome of God in teaching maister Luther so many necessarie thinges to salvation, then I searche his [God's] secret iudgements in keeping backe from his [Luther's] knowledge other matters of lesser importance. Yea but howe is it likelie... that you should see that which he [Luther] could not? whereto I say, that a meane sighted man may see that when the Sunne shineth bright and cleare, which a sharpe sighted would not haue espied in the dawning of the day. ... it is [the benefite of time] to cause it to be easier nowe to see, that abuses of ceremonies, than it was at the first, to espie the errours of doctrine." See A parte of a register, 89.

of the Church constitution & governement".[1]

As to whether these Reformers had been saved or not, Jacob, like Elizabethan puritans, appealed to the "ignorance" apology and defended their reformation titans by arguing that they, though they died in serious errors, should be looked up to as "faithfull servantes of Christ according to that measure of light wherein they lived". He did not doubt that these Reformers' errors had been "graciously pardoned in Christ". But now, Jacob went on to argue, with the appearance of more light in this end-time, there was "no excuse" for those who continued to walk in the errors.[2]

Jacob then turned to the "progressive" revelation theology and contended that, "ever since the discovery of Antichrist", the light of "the holy Gospell" had shone "more cleerely then it did for many yeres before: so doubtles it will [shine] more and more... and be made further manifest to al men even where the Gospell is receaved."[3]

It is obvious that the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans followed John Foxe in dividing church history into two processes. In the first process, the light of the biblical truth was gradually obscured by increasing antichristian darkness that culminated in Boniface VIII. This process of the gradual rise of the Man of Sin (2 Thes 2:3) was eventually reversed by another process -- the process of his gradual downfall, in which the heavy layers of the antichristian darkness with which the Church of Christ had been encrusted for centuries were

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1. Jacob, Attestation, 29, 49, 52; idem, Reasons, 55; CS, 104.
2. Loc. cit.; CS, 105.
3. Jacob, Attestation, 18; CS, 106.

progressively pushed back by the light of the Word, which would shine brighter and brighter until the day when Christ would come again and consume the Man of Sin.

2. Congregational discipline -- a latter-day light

Having made clear the theological setting of the argument, we shall now turn our attention to the Apologeticall Narration and see how the dissenting brethren thought of "further light".

To begin with, the dissenting brethren stated that, whenever they came across some "cases" in which they failed to see any clear biblical sanctions, they preferred to leave them to God, Who would eventually give them "further light", without eking out their lack of clear biblical guidance with their own wisdom, and in doing so they would know more about God's will:

> And for all such cases wherein we saw not a cleare resolution from Scripture, example, or direction, wee stil professedly suspended, untill God should give us further light, not daring to eeke out what was defective in our light in matters Divine with humane prudence (the fatall errour to Reformation) lest by sowing any piece of the old garment unto the new, we should make the rent worse; we having this promise of grace for our encouragement in this, which in our publique Assemblies was often for our comfort mentioned, that in thus doing the will of God we should know more.[1]

There are two points in this statement: first, Scripture had its objective truths -- "cleare resolution... example, or direction", yet man's understanding of them was developed step by step. Second, God would not give man further light unless man humbled himself. The fatal error of the Reformation was that Protestants did not humble themselves, but contented themselves with their half-reformed churches and saw the Reformation as a closed movement, a finished campaign.

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1. AN, 10.

Thus the dissenting brethren formulated their second principle that they would make no "binding law" for the future and leave the door open for more light. As they declared:

> Not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law unto our selves for the future.... We had too great an instance of our own frailty in the former way of our conformity; and therefore... we kept this reserve, (which we made open...) to alter and retract (though not lightly) what ever should be discovered to be taken up out of a mis-understanding of the rule: Which principle wee wish were... enacted as the most sacred law of all other.[1]

The second principle shows that the truth is not static but dynamic.[2]

The dissenting brethren then showed how the history of the reformation had demonstrated the progressive unfolding of biblical truth. They acknowledged that early Reformers, both Continental and English, had been so preoccupied with the doctrine of grace that they had failed to see the biblical light about church discipline:

> And although we consulted with reverence what they hold forth both in their writings and practice, yet we could not but suppose that they might not see into all things about worship and government, their intentions being most spent (as also of our first Reformers in England) upon the Reformation in Doctrine, in

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1. AN, 10f.

2. This principle had already been enunciated by the New England Congregationals. For examples, Mather, while conceding that "to set forth a platforme... in some cases... may be lawfull," insisted that a platform "as a binding Rule of Faith and practice" was "unlawfull". It was a "dangerous hinderance of some verity and degree of truth" to bind men "to rest in their former apprehensions and knowledge", "without adding, altering, or omitting" "what they saw at first"; and "to shut the doore against any further light which God may give to his best servants". See CGCC, 63f. In a similar note Cotton wrote: "we shall sinne against... the Word of truth if we confine our truth, either to the Divines of present or former ages." See Cotton, A Modest and Clear Answer, 45. It was possibly also under the influence of Mather and Cotton that the Congregational covenanters at Great Yarmouth stated in their covenant on 28 June 1643: "We do not... confine ourselves to the word of this covenant; but shall account it our duty at all times to embrace any further light or truth, that shall be revealed to us out of God's word". John Browne, History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk, 211. Cf. infra, 269.

which they had a most happy hand.

But, they continued, the light about church discipline had been discovered by the earnest "old Non-conformists", who had drafted a church discipline, which was different from that of the Reformed Churches, but was very much appreciated by themselves:

> We had the advantage of all that light which the conflicts of our owne Divines (the good old Non-conformists) had struck forth in their times; And the draughts of Discipline which they had drawn; which we found not in all things the very same with the practises of the Reformed Churches; And what they had written came much more commended to us....

Complaining that the Presbyterians were content with "a general reformation" without calling for a further reformation of the Reformed Church itself, the dissenting brethren wrote:

> we found the judgement of many of our godly learned brethren in the Ministery [English presbyterian divines] (that desired a general reformation) to differ from ours in some things, wherein we do professedly judge the Calvinian Reformed Churches of the first reformation from out of Popery, to stand in need of a further reformation themselves....[1]

The above statements show that reformation has several steps: the reformation of church doctrine by the first-generation Reformers, the discovery of the light of church order by the English nonconformists, and the further reformation of church order by the Congregationals. To find out the details lying behind these statements, we must examine

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1. AN, 4, 22f. Congregationals differed from Presbyterians also in their views of the pace of reformation. The latter were so impatient that they expected reformation to be accomplished by a "speedy" religious settlement. See Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions, title page et 2. By contrast, the former were so patient that they maintained that reformation was a slow process. As Burton reasoned: "Shall a corrupt, profane, polluted Land, not yet washed from her old superstitions, not yet wained from the AEgyptian fleshpots... become all on a sudden a Reformed Nation? ... as Rome was not built in one day, nor the mystery of iniquitie perfected in one day: so neither can Rome be so easily pulled down in one day: nor can England become a Mount Sion in one day.... A Reformation, therefore... will necessarily require longer time yet...." See Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 1f.

Goodwin's teachings in his fast-day sermon, Zervbbabels Encovragement (22 April 1642), concerning the gradual erection of the Temple in its true worship.

Goodwin made the process of building the Second Temple in the Old Testament stand in perfect alignment with the long-range contour of reformation history in terms of biblical types and historical antitypes:

Type	Anti-type
Babylonians "laid waste the Temple and worship of God for seventy yeares".	Deformation -- antichristian Rome laid the Church of Christ desolate, and "defiled Gods worship in all parts of it".
The Jews rebuilt the Temple after coming out of Babylon.	Reformation -- God's people restored the true church after coming out of antichristian darkness.
The Temple was built "not at once, but by degrees": the altar was erected (Ezra 3:3); sacrifices were offered on Mount Sion, and a few feasts were kept (Ezra 3:6); "the foundation of the Temple was laid, but left	The restoration of the true church was "a work of time": the Holy Spirit "by light", while gradually dispelling the antichristian darkness, shone "clearer and clearer to the perfect day, which is the brightnesse of Christs

imperfect" (Ezra 3:8); comming".[1]

"after the succession of two
or three Kings, the Temple
is said to be finished"
(Ezra 6:15).

But how did the light shine clearer and clearer until the mid-day brightness? Goodwin's Zervbbabels Encovragement and his exposition of the 11th and 14th chapters of the Revelation show us the entire process, in which we see three stages: the light at midnight (pre-Waldensian era); the light from dawn to early morning (from Waldenses to Reformation); the light from early morning to midday (from Reformation to the revival of the Congregational churches).

The light at midnight (pre-Waldensian era)

Goodwin interpreted Revelation 14:1-4 as "the first beginnings of a dislike of Popery". Those who stood upon Mount Sion (here no Temple is mentioned) were playing harps and singing "as it were a new song". These were the "virgins", "the first-fruits to God", who served the Lord "in sweet melodious strains of true devotion", and in "the truth of the gospel", "murmuring against superstitions daily arising in those times", and uttering something different from the doctrine of the day. None the less, they sang the gospel song "so confusedly, as no man could learne that song." That is to say, no other papists could "understand that they differed from them" in doctrine.[2]

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1. ZE, 3, 12f.

2. ZE, 14; Goodwin, On Revelation, 601-10.

The light from dawn to early morning (from Waldenses to Reformation)

Revelation 14:6-12, as Goodwin saw it, referred to the history in which, as light increased, "the voice and cry of three angels" -- Waldenses, Wycliffe/Huss, and Luther, "rise higher and higher, and louder and louder, against Antichrist and his company". The Waldenses were the first to fall away from Rome by preaching "the everlasting Gospel", i.e., "salvation by Christ alone", which sounded "new", but "everlasting", and calling upon men to "feare and worship God alone... and not to worship Saints and Angels". More openly than the Waldenses, Wycliffe and Huss condemned Rome as "the whore of Babylon". As the third angel, Luther went further. He preached more vehemently that "all those that will cleave unto her doctrine and superstitions, shall drink of the wrath of God for ever," and thereupon urged "a separation from her". After that, the Temple was mentioned (Rev 14:15), which implied that Protestant Churches had now been established. However, according to Revelation 11, this was only the first "edition" of the Temple (the first reformation). Although "Joshua and Zerubbabel" (the first-generation Reformers and Magistrates) "laid the foundation", yet they left the Temple "imperfect", because it was defiled by having an outward court attached, in which there was "an ignorant and profane multitude".[1]

The light from early morning to midday (from Reformation to the revival of the Congregational churches)

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1. Goodwin, On Revelation, 610, 636ff, 640f, 647; ZE, 14f.

Stirred up by God, "Haggai and Zechariah" (English puritans) endeavoured "to finish what was before left incomplete", and "to make a further and purer edition of churches according to the pattern". (This was called "the reformation of that Reformation".) Thus, "the godly of this age", with "a line or reed" (the Bible) in their hands, tried "to measure that temple anew... and to cast out that outward court [unmeasured]", that is, "to take the precious from the vile", so that the Temple might be conformed to its "ordinances instituted of God". This second edition of the Temple ("the inward Temple") was the better one.[1] This covers the period of "foure-score yeers" (1560-1640) as mentioned in the Apologeticall Narration.[2] In their apologia, the dissenting brethren gave an account of what God had done in the past scores of years for England, where God in His providence had graciously left the Church less reformed than Continental Churches so that English Protestants could now more humbly and earnestly seek reform, and thus embrace more and more light of truth, only to be exalted as a shining example for all the other Churches:

> it may hopefully be conceived, that God in his secret, yet wise and gracious dispensation, had left England more unreformed as touching the outward form, both of worship & Church government, then the neighbour Churches were, having yet powerfully continued a constant conflict and contention for a further Reformation for these foure-score yeers; during which time he had likewise in stead thereof blessed them with the spiritual light (and that encreasing) of the power of Religion in the Practique part of it, shining brighter and clearer then in the neighbour Churches, as

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1. Goodwin, On Revelation, 607, 637, 639f, 647f; ZE, 16.

2. Earlier, Goodwin explained that this was a soul-harvesting period, following in the wake of "the third angel's gospel-voice, under the authority of kings and magistrates [the magisterial reformation]", as prophesied in Revelation 14:14-16. In this period, there was a "glorious peace and sunshine of the gospel", and "the conversion and gathering in of the elect by preaching". See Goodwin, On Revelation, 612.

> having in his infinite mercy on purpose reserved and provided some better thing for this Nation when it should come to be reformed, that the other Churches might not be made perfect without it, as the Apostle speaks [Heb. 11:40].[1]

In Revelation 15, there appeared the Ark. This symbolised the most perfect, beautiful, and glorious edition of the Temple -- the "Holy of Holies", into which no unclean thing shall enter. This "Holy of Holies" represented the arising Congregational churches composed of the visible saints, the elect.[2] Now the process begun by the Waldenses, Wycliffe/Huss, and Luther could be said to have been completed. The Congregationall way was also the inception of the Millennium, which was the main theme of Goodwin's Glimpse of Sions Glory. The Congregational way and millennialism were so closely related that he stated

> Seeing these things shall be, what manner of persons ought to be? That is the worke I intended to have done, to have shewed you the Duties, these things call for at our Hands. If God hath such an intention to glorifie his Church... What manner of persons ought yee to bee? because you are beginning this despised Worke, gathering a Church together, which way God will honour. Certainly the Communion of Saints, and Independency of Congregations God will honour.

In short, the thousand-year reign of Christ must be preceded by "gathering a Church together".[3]

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1. AN, 22f. The last lines of the paragraph show us the old popular feeling of the Elizabethans that the English nation had her appointed place in the Heilgeschite: they were a specially favoured people, a new Israel, destined to lead the other nations back to God's true religion and end the tyranny of Antichrist. This feeling culminated especially in 1588 when God raised a mighty storm to help Queen Elizabeth's fleet throw back the Armada of Antichristian invaders from Spain. For this idea, see William Haller, Foxes' Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (1963), 87f, 109, 226, 236f, 241, 245, 249.

2. ZE, 16; Goodwin, On Revelation, 638.

3. [Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory, 8, 18, 32f.

In the above account, we have seen how the light increased from the thick darkness of popery to the brightness of Congregational discipline -- a prelude to the Millennium. Inasmuch as the light increased by degrees, the first Reformers who had "had a most happy hand... in Doctrine" but had failed to "see into all things about worship and government" were not to blame. In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren affirmed that it was not a dishonour to the Reformers to say that they had not fully finished the work of the reformation:

> it may without prejuidice to them... be thought, that they coming new out of Popery... and the founders of that reformation not having Apostolique infallibility, might not be fully perfect the first day.[1]

As the light of observing "the Feast of Tabernacles" aright according to the law, i.e., "dwelling in boothes", had not been discovered, "since the dayes of Ieshua", until the days when the Jews came out of Babylon (Neh 8:13-18; Ezra 3:4);[2] so the light of keeping the Congregational way according to the New Testament had not been seen, since the very beginnings of the apostasy, until the end-time when God's people completely came out of antichristian Rome. In this sense, Congregational discipline was truly the "further light".

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1. AN, 22f. The same idea is to be found in ZE, 16f: Goodwin even praised the Reformers for their purposing "more then they did". However, he added, "they were not Apostles, to whom nothing might be added." For God did not guide these Reformers, as He had guided the apostles, "by immediate inspiration, but by his Spirit... begetting light in an ordinary way". On this account, "the Churches comming out of the darknesse of Popery, must needs recover that fulnesse and perfection of light (which the Apostolicall times had) by piece-meals and degrees." Goodwin recognised that the Reformers "had so happy a hand" in "matters of Faith, or Doctrine", that little fault was to be found therein. "But in matters of Order, which concerne Worship and Discipline", said he, their opinions were still not "so exact".

2. ZE, 18f.

Conclusion

In the Apologeticall Narration, there is a paradox between "the first principle" and "the second principle". The first curves backward to the New Testament church (protology), while the second is open to the future (eschatology). This dialectic retrogressive and progressive movement indicates that the church must be constantly reformed so that it may come closer and closer to the primal state of the church ("paradise lost"), and that the church must always draw nearer and nearer towards the New Testament church so that it may be conformed to the coming Millennium ("paradise regained"). But the "paradise regained" is not so much a simple reiteration of the "paradise lost" as an elevation of it.

The dissenting brethren revered the primitive model of the church as described in the New Testament, and deprecated human additions and reason, just in the same way as the puritans had done in their controversy with the anglicans over the adiaphoral issues. This shows that the dissenting brethren's thinking was still a continuation of that of the puritans. Like their predecessors, they were convinced that the primitive pattern of the church had been contained in Sacred Writ and remained the same in all generations without any hint that it could be developed and changed according to expedience and reason. This "immutable" church pattern was none other than Congregational discipline. To deviate from this apostolic practice was tantamount to apostasy. It seemed to them that the Congregational discipline was an articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae.

The dissenting brethren's "further light" argument, in which the light of the Word was said to shine more and more clearly until the End, was nothing original. Actually it had lain embedded in the puritans' eschatological thought. However they departed from the puritan consensus about amillennialism by critically developing the millennial thought of two prophetic writers, Brightman and Mede, whose influence had not been felt until around 1639. The dissenting brethren's "historicist" approach to Daniel and Revelation convinced them that they were living in the end-time of the prophetic "1,260 days", when the most perfect light of Congregational discipline was being retrieved, and when Christ would be coming in brightness to commence His millennial rule on the earth. But the rule of Christ must be preceded by the rule of the congregations of saints on earth, because Christ would not rule each congregation directly in His Word unless every intermediary, pope, bishop, and presbytery, was torn away; herein lies the ultimate reason for the Congregational way. Therefore, only by setting up gathered churches could they usher in the Kingdom of Christ.

It was because the Congregational discipline was a matter of the rise and fall of the church, and it was because the Congregational discipline was the precondition of the arrival of the coming Kingdom that the dissenting brethren held forth "this true and just Apologie unto the world, That in the matters of greatest moment and controversie", they "chose the better part" and preferred the "congregationall governement".

CHAPTER FIVE

"PEACEABLE PRACTISES OF OUR CONSCIENCES" AND "A LATITUDE TO SOME LESSER DIFFERENCES"

In the previous chapter, we saw that the dissenting brethren's Congregational practice was theologically motivated by their restitutionism and millennialism. In this chapter, we shall see that their Congregational practice was psychologically motivated by both their strong concern with their own salvation and their strong sense of accountability before God. It was out of these two that the dissenting brethren advocated toleration.

We propose to divide this chapter into four sections: I. The Congregational Way -- A Safe Way; II. A Plea for Toleration; III. Toleration: Unity without Uniformity; IV. Complete Toleration? The first section is intended as a prelude to the others that are about toleration itself. The second deals with the backgrounds against which the dissenting brethren made their plea for toleration, and with the consciences whereby their plea was motivated. The third is concerned with their toleration theory and its origins. The fourth discusses the difference between their religious toleration and Roger Williams' religious liberty.

I. The Congregational Way -- A Safe Way

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren actually related church order to salvation when they wrote: "We could not therefore but judge it a safe... way to retaine the government of our

severall congregations for matter of discipline within themselves, to be exercised by their own Elders...."[1] This statement implies that the Congregational discipline had its soteriological significance. Why did they relate church order to salvation? This question must be answered by examining the puritans' thought of ecclesiology as a soteriological issue. (As stated before, there was an ideological continuation between puritans and Congregationals). The more we look into the puritans' thought, the better we understand the statement of the dissenting brethren. Hence we sub-divide this section into two: A. Church Order and Salvation in the Thought of the Puritans; B. Church Order and Salvation in the Thought of the Congregationals.

A. Church Order and Salvation in the Thought of the Puritans

One of the leading questions that dominated Reformation theology was: "where can I find the true Church?"[2] This question became a serious concern of 17th-century English puritans in particular with the problem of salvation.

Down the centuries, the old Cyprianic formula, nulla salus extra ecclesiam -- a belief in exclusive salvation -- had never lost its appeal. St Augustine claimed that only the Catholic Church preserved the objective means of grace. Boniface VIII in his bull, Unam Sanctam (1302), declared that outside the Church of Rome there was neither salvation nor remission of sins. The classical Reformers all proclaimed that salvation was only to be found in the church where

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1. AN, 14.

2. Avis, The Church in the Theology of the Reformers, 1.

there was the ministry of kerygma (the preaching of the gospel).[1]

It should be noted that Roman Catholic exclusiveness was chiefly concerned with ecclesial organisation, whereas Protestant exclusiveness was largely concerned with doctrinal matters.[2] Calvin followed the German Reformers in holding that matters of church polity were not fundamenta, but adiaphora.[3] Although he advocated a Presbyterian church pattern for the Reformed Church in France, yet he allowed the Polish Protestants to have their bishops, even an archbishop.[4] It is evident that Calvin did not attack episcopacy as such, provided that it secured the gospel.

History sometimes comes full circle. Although the first-generation Calvinists maintained a latitudinarian attitude toward matters of ecclesial organisation, the second-generation Calvinists came to emphasise the importance of church order. Calvin's successor in Geneva, Beza, advocated the divine right of presbytery; for he was convinced that Christ Himself, through the apostles, had laid down in detail the Presbyterian discipline, and that all other forms of church government were therefore to be regarded as unlawful.[5] This strategic shift from doctrine to ecclesiology was most obviously seen in

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1. Von Rohr, "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus", CH, XXXVI, 107.

2. Ibid.

3. Inst., IV, 10:27: "in these observances [of church government] one thing must be guarded against. They are not to be considered necessary for salvation and thus bind consciences by scruples."

4. George Yule, Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament, 1640-1647 (Abingdon, 1981), 27.

5. Avis, op. cit., 114.

England, where the puritans, it seems, forged a link between church order and salvation and thus came back to the Roman Catholic principle of extra ecclesiam nulla salus.[1]

Dr Brachlow in his research points out that the conviction of the puritans about the soteriological significance of church order actually "found its biblical source in their perception of the import of the second commandment in the decalogue and its value for maintaining the covenant bond with God".[2] Here we see that puritans' ecclesiology had much to do with the Mosaic law and their covenant theology.

To clarify the relationship between puritan ecclesiology and Mosaic law, we should begin with the puritan covenant. Unlike Calvin's covenant that was unconditional,[3] the puritan covenant was a mutual pactio between God and man. As Perkins interpreted it:

> Gods couenant, is his contract with man, concerning the obtaining of life eternal, vpon a certen condition.
> This couenant consisteth of two parts: Gods promise to man, Mans promise to God.
> Gods promise to man, is that, whereby he bindeth himselfe to man to bee his God, if he performe the condition.
> Mans promise to God, is that, whereby he voweth his allegiance vnto his Lord, and to performe the condition betweene them.[4]

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1. Like Roman Catholics, the puritans seemed to believe that one's attachment to the true church was as important as one's upholding of sound doctrines. Ames had it that those who "have opportunity to joyne themselves to the [true] Church and neglect it can scarce be accounted for believers truly seeking the Kingdome of GOD", no matter how orthodox their doctrines might be. See Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, I, 32:28.

2. CS, 35.

3. CS, 32.

4. The Workes W. Perkins, I, 32; CS, 33.

By man's performance of the condition was meant his perfect obedience of the moral law of Scripture. Speaking of the law, Thomas Wilcox and John Field confessed: "though wee hold our selues freed from the lawe, and the ceremoniall keeping of the same: yet wee keepe the doctrine thereof."[1] Later on, Henry Jacob argued that, although salvation depends entirely upon grace, still man has a duty to observe the law, that is, the Ten Commandments. Law does not stand in opposition to grace; one's true faith makes its presence felt only in one's faithful performance of the Mosaic law.[2] These radical Protestants affirmed that only by keeping the law of God scrupulously and casuistically did they have the assurance of salvation. This is so-called "experimental predestinarianism".[3]

To some extent, there is a resemblance between the puritan covenant theology and the "doctrine of preparation for grace" of late medieval nominalism (via moderna). According to the teachings of the via moderna, the sacrament is effective ex opere operantis. That is to say, if man does not "do what lies within him" (facere quod in se est), he will not be able to effect justification ex pacto divino, as mediated through the sacrament; conversely, if man does quod in se est, though what he does is inadequate to appropriate grace de congruo, his acts will be accepted by God ex pacto as being worthy of

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1. A parte of a register, 535; CS, 33.

2. Jacob, A plaine and cleere Exposition of the Second Commandement, sigs. B1r-v, B3v, B4r-v; CS, 59.

3. CS, 33, 58ff; supra, 57f. Dr Brachlow comments to the effect that the puritan position lay ambiguously between "Mosaic covenant" (law) and "Abrahamic covenant" (promise). In the objective realm of systematic theology, they emphasised grace only (Calvinism), but in the subjective realm of practical divinity, they seemed to stress the law (Arminianism). See CS, 34.

salvation.[1] Seen in this light, covenant theology seemed to come near the point where it was in effect devoid of predestinarian implications, though lip-service was still paid to the doctrine of predestination.[2]

According to Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans, the second commandment was specifically concerned with matters of church order or worship. In this commandment, saints were "forbidde[n]" to practise any form of man-made worship not found in Scripture, either explicitly or implicitly, but to "practise all... worship, which he [God] in his worde hath commanded". Hence, "the least swaruing from or breach" of the biblical church order required by the second commandment would effect the dissolution of the pactio between God and man, and thus lead to "eternall damnation"; while a faithful observance of it would issue in "eternall life" as promised in the covenant.[3]

The puritan biblical grounds for relating church order to salvation having been noted, it is necessary to single out Henry Jacob's view of the relationship between church order and salvation for specific review. This will help us understand why the Congregationals took Congregational polity so seriously. The main argument of Jacob was that soteriological assurance could be attained by faithful obedience to the church order instituted by Jesus, the Mosaic "Lawgiver" of the new covenant. He argued that, according to

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1. For the teaching of the via moderna, see Alister E. McGrath, Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification, I (Cambridge, 1986), 83, 96f.

2. Cf. Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, 395f.

3. Dudley Fenner, A brief Treatise vpon the first Table of the Lavve (Middleburgh, 1589), sigs. C1v-2r; Jacob, op. cit., sigs. E2r, D6r, D8r-v, E7r-v; Paul Bayne, A Helpe to Trve Happinesse (1618), 30; CS, 35f, 39, 44, 59; Kendall, op. cit., 51-76.

the locus classicus (2 Peter 1:10), believers are asked to make their "calling and election sure, by walking in the true outward way". That is, to "observe 2. Commandement in all the parts of it, a maine part whereof under the Gospell is this forme of a visible Church, and government."[1] By the "forme of a visible Church, and government", Jacob meant a congregationally organised and governed church. Observing this church government was actually fulfilling "the 2d. Commandment". Those who failed to observe it would jeopardise their salvation, "for out of a true Visible [congregational] Church ordinarily there is no salvation," he declared. Only the congregational way was "the [ordinary] way to heaven" and could secure the safety of the souls.[2]

Now one question arises: did Jacob advocate a rigid principle of extra ecclesiam nulla salus as the Roman Catholics did? On the one hand, as Professor von Rohr observes, Jacob was rigid enough to consider matters of church order as matters of faith; on the other hand, he was of the opinion that matters of church order were matters "ordinarily necessarie to salvation".[3] The word "ordinarily" that Jacob repeatedly used shows that Jacob still allowed room for a possible "extra-ordinary" salvation outwith the "true visible Church". Jacob's position might be understood as this: those who had seen the light about church order but deliberately refused to join the visible

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1. Henry Jacob, The Divine Beginning and Institution of Christs true Visible or Ministeriall Church (Leiden, 1610), sigs. D8r, F1v, F2v; idem, Confession, sig. D3r-v; CS, 59f.

2. Jacob, A plaine and cleere Exposition, D6v; idem, Attestation, 151f; von Rohr, "Extra Ecclesiam", CH, XXXVI, 118f, 121; CS, 58.

3. Jacob, Confession, sig. B1r; von Rohr, "Extra Ecclesiam", CH, XXXVI, 119. Italics mine.

church instituted by Christ would ipso facto lose their salvation, while those who were faithful but failed to join it because of shortage of light could still be saved.[1] Jacob's opinion actually represented the general opinion of the puritans.[2]

B. Church Order and Salvation in the Thought of the Congregationals

It is obvious that Jacob's conviction about the value of church polity for soteriological assurance and security had repercussions in the Apologeticall Narration, in which the dissenting brethren expressed the view that their Congregational way "might well serve to preserve our Churches in peace and from offence, and would comfortably guide us to heaven in safe way".[3]

As indicated in the previous chapter, the dissenting brethren believed that in Scripture there was "a compleat sufficiencie" of "directions and examples" concerning church order for man to follow. It was through these "directions and examples" that God laid down the church order in detail, which was "cleare and certain" to them.[4] Of all these "directions and examples", the second commandment in the Decalogue, it seemed to Thomas Goodwin, was the key principle, in which God was said to be jealous of "any aberration or swerving from his own rules". Therefore Goodwin warned that "if the worship of God and every part of it doth so much concerne Gods glory... then take heed how you meddle with it. Be sure you set the service of the house

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1. Supra, 220.
2. Cf. supra, 212n, 234n.
3. AN, 10.
4. Supra, 202f.

of the Lord in its right order...." He cited the story in 2 Samuel 6 as an example to show a kind of linkage between church order and salvation:

> It was a good and a religious purpose in David to bring the Arke... he mistook but in the other: he set it upon a cart, when as the Priests shoulders should have carried it. Himselfe thus speaks of it, We sought not God after the due order, (that is, Gods Institution) I Chro. 15.30. And when it was like to fall, Uzzah did but touch it to keep it up, (and that too was done out of a good zeale) God smote him for it; though God himselfe acknowledgeth it to have been but an error, or rashnesse in him, even when hee smote him, 2 Sam. 6.7. ... an errour about the Arke.[1]

There is no doubt that Goodwin was convinced that observing God-prescribed polity was in effect fulfilling the second commandment. Any "aberration or swerving from" this polity was an actual violation of the divine law. One's violation of the divine law would, of course, jeopardise one's salvation.

Did the dissenting brethren also preach the sectarian doctrine of exclusive salvation? In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren declared that "in the matters of greatest moment and controversie, we still chose to practice safely." To this they added elsewhere: "We could not... but judge it a safe... way to retaine the government of our severall congregations for matter of discipline within themselves, to be exercised by their own Elders...." Here they actually said that in the controversy over church order they preferred the Congregational way to the Presbyterial one. For the former, they believed, "might well serve to preserve our Churches in peace and from offence, and would comfortably guide us to heaven in safe way".[2] Phrases like "to practice safely", "a safe way", and "in safe way"

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1. ZE, 31, 38, 32.

2. AN, 11, 14, 10. Italics mine.

suggest that the dissenting brethren did not necessarily believe that their way was the "only" way to Heaven. To them it was but a "safe" way to Heaven or a "better" way to make their calling and election sure.[1] Psychologically speaking, the dissenting brethren must affirm that the greatest soteriological security was to be found in the Congregational way, although salvation outwith this way was not altogether impossible.[2]

The conviction that the Congregational way was a "safe way" to Heaven compelled the dissenting brethren to plead for religious toleration.

II. A Plea for Toleration

Having rendered a clear and brief account of their Congregational "wayes", the dissenting brethren began to plead with Parliament for toleration. They besought Parliament not to look upon them as "hinderers" or "disturbers of the publique peace", but to consider them as those who had suffered for years even to the point of exile

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1. Here I cannot see any difference between their "safe" way to Heaven and Jacob's "ordinary" way to Heaven.

2. In this matter, the New England divine, Mather, may have exerted some influence on the dissenting brethren. He wrote thus: "that saying, Extra Ecclesiam non est salus... cannot be universally true, if it be meant of the visible Church... but onely being taken for the Church invisible.... [As] for the Visible, we believe... [that] there are many Wolves within, and many Sheepe without, Joh. 10.16. ... there are some not joyned to the Visible Church: If the Thief that repented on the Cross was a Gentile... then hee was uncircumcised... yet there is no doubt but he was saved. ... there may be salvation out of that Church... [but] voluntarily abstaining from joyning to the [true] Church is... condemned as a sinne, Heb. 10.25." See CGCC, 37-40.

and who, being threatened by "another banishment", sought for nothing but "a subsistance (be it the poorest and meanest)" in their homeland "with the enjoyment of the ordinances of Christ" and "with the allowance of a latitude to some lesser differences".[1] Here are raised two questions: why did the dissenting brethren plead with Parliament for help? And why were they so concerned about the toleration issue? These questions are to be discussed under the following headings: A. Historical Backgrounds; B. "Be True to Our Own Consciences".

A. Historical Backgrounds

The first question we raised above must be answered in terms of its Dutch background as provided by Berndt Gustafsson, who shows us how the doctrinal conflict became entangled with Dutch politics between 1610 and 1631, and then in terms of its English background as provided by George Yule, who argues that in late 1643 political decisions of the Erastians in Parliament depended heavily upon their religious beliefs.

1. Dutch background

As early as 1610 in Holland, forty-three Arminian ministers, led by Episcopius (d.1643), submitted a defensive apology known as the Remonstrance to the state. In this document, the Remonstrants advanced their synergistic view and protested against the rigid Calvinistic

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1. AN, 30f. Italics mine. See also AN, 3f: "We had no new Commonwealths to rear, to frame Church-government unto.... We had no State-ends or Politicall interests to comply with; No Kingdoms in our eye to subdue unto our mould.... No preferment or worldly respects to shape our opinions for: We had nothing else to doe but simply and singly to consider how to worship God acceptably, and so most according to his word." Italics mine.

supralapsarianism. They also made known their conviction that God had established the civil authority with the purpose that it might administer both ecclesial and political affairs, and therefore the church must subordinate itself to the state in external matters. Afterwards, for nearly a decade, they fought for religious toleration by appealing to the state against attacks from obstinate churchmen. In 1619, the Remonstrants were condemned by the Synod of Dort and were then exiled abroad for their nonconformity. They were not allowed to practise their faith freely at home until 1631, when the previous edict against them was nullified and they were granted toleration by the state. This vexed the orthodox churchmen, but they were silenced by the civil authority.

By the year when the dissenting brethren came to Holland, Holland had been a liberal country for years. In this country, the dissenting brethren, like the Remonstrants, enjoyed not only religious toleration, but also the patronage of the Dutch government. During their stay in Holland, Gustafsson suggests, they were undoubtedly influenced by the conviction of the Remonstrants that the church should take the state as the only court of appeal in doctrinal controversy. It was partly motivated by this conviction that the dissenting brethren petitioned the magistrates for help.[1]

2. English background

Based on the conviction that religion and politics were embroiled together, Professor Yule argues that the political life of England during the Civil War was largely influenced by Independency. In the

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1. Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren, 52-8, 62, 68, 70. See also Anta., 155-8.

initial stage of the War, there were three political groupings aligned on the parliamentary side: the peace party, the war party, and a middle party.[1] As a result of the compromise of the peace party, the parliamentary forces frequently suffered reverses. In order to prevent Parliament from being defeated, the radical wing of the middle party joined forces with the war party and then sent Sir Henry Vane, the younger,[2] Philip Nye and others across the river Tweed to ask the Scots for military succour. It was not until the death of Pym in December that power in Parliament passed to the war party. The members of this political group were largely Independents, with Sir Henry Vane as their leader. Inasmuch as they were Independents in Parliament, they could be properly distinguished as "political Independents" from those "clerical Independents" in the Westminster Assembly.[3] Some of the political Independents felt that they were in an awkward situation. On the one hand, they needed Scottish military aid; on the other, being religiously Independents, they feared that the rigorous and intolerant Scottish presbyteries would be like the Laudian regime, under which they would probably face another banishment.[4]

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1. Supra, 19f.

2. Sir Henry Vane (d.1662) was an important figure of the English Revolution. In 1635, he migrated to Massachusetts for conscience sake. In 1636, he was elected governor of Massachusetts. Having been displaced by Winthrop in the elections of 1637, he returned to England in the summer of that year. See BDBR.

3. By "political Independents" were meant not only those MPs who accepted the Congregational view of the church, though not themselves members of the gathered churches, but also those MPs who feared the Scots and disliked the prospect of uniformity, and therefore acted as the patrons and allies of the gathered churches, though not themselves religious Independents at all.

4. Men like Sir Henry Vane, Lord Saye, and Lord Brooke, who were prominent political Independents, either migrated or thought of migrating for conscience's sake during the Laudian persecution.

Consequently, owing to their religious belief, they were determined to ensure not merely a military victory but a certain religious toleration against the Presbyterianism, which the Solemn League and Covenant had made obligatory. Evidently their belief in Independency governed their political decisions; this is the thrust of Professor Yule's argument.[1]

The dissenting brethren realised that the Westminster Assembly was actually controlled by the Erastians in Parliament, and it was with them, not with the clerics in the Assembly, that final decisions in regard to religious matters rested.[2] They were also aware that these Erastians, such as Lord Wharton (d.1696) and Lord Saye in the House of Lords, and Sir Henry Vane and Oliver St John (king's solicitor and Pym's successor) in the House of Commons, were known to favour them and oppose the Scottish efforts to impose their Presbyterian uniformity in England. It was partly for this reason that the dissenting brethren took courage and submitted their case to what they judged to be their "Supreame Judicatory" -- Parliament.[3]

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1. Yule, The Independents in the English Civil War, 19, 29f, 42f. It must be noted here that Professor Yule in his argument failed to see the fact that the Erastians' laissez faire in religion also reflected their laissez faire in trade. The Erastians in Parliament were known to be largely in the trading and wealthy classes. In order to develop capitalism, they must first of all ensure religious toleration. They knew perfectly well that civil liberties could scarcely thrive where religious toleration was not ensured. See R.H. Bainton, The Travail of Religious Liberty (1953), 254. See also LJ, II, 360, in which Baillie wrote that the Erastians advocated religious toleration "not so much upon conscience, as upon fear that the Presbyterie spoile their merkat".

2. Baillie also admitted that the Westminster Assembly "have no power to write one lyne to any soul, but as the Parliament directs". See LJ, II, 186.

3. AN, 2.

It is beyond question that the dissenting brethren's appeal to the magistrates was on the one hand motivated by what the Remonstrants had done in Holland and on the other encouraged by the fact that they had their religious allies in Parliament.

B. "Be True to Our Own Consciences"

Now we turn to the second question raised above: why were the dissenting brethren so concerned about the toleration issue? We have dealt with the negative aspect of the dissenting brethren's concern with toleration.[1] But what is the positive aspect of their concern?

To begin with, we must be aware that by 1641 there had been few people in England who believed in religious toleration, except for a handful of General Baptists, and John Hales (d.1656), an anglican divine, William Chillingworth, a forerunner of the Latitudinarian school, Great Tew, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury (d.1648).[2] The essentially medieval concept of cuius regio, eius religio was still deeply ingrained in the minds of Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and New England Congregationals, who believed that toleration would constitute a threat to man's souls, the state, and the whole structure of Christian civilisation. In May 1641, Parliament drafted a "Protestation", calling for an Established Church as "expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England". To protest against this, Henry Burton published his Protestation Protested, in which he pleaded for the toleration of independent congregations.[3]

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1. Supra, 238ff.

2. J.W. Allen, English Political Thought 1603-1644 (Archou Books, 1967), 219-27, 234-52.

3. Supra, 17.

This obviously threatened to cast a blight over the promised land of the English "Presbyterians", who expected that England would be like the ancient Jewish Commonwealth, in which there was one nation and one religion, and these two were closely bound together.[1] In reply to Burton, Thomas Edwards, an advocate of the national church, published his Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations: As also against the Toleration of such Churches to be erected in this Kingdome. Though himself persecuted by Laud, Edwards was no more sympathetic towards religious diversity than his persecutor had been. He argued that Scripture was against toleration:

> the Scriptures are expresse against their Toleration and sufferance, requiring them who have power, to hinder it, as may be seene, Rev.2.20. I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that Woman Jesabel, which calleth her selfe a Prophetesse to teach, and to seduce my Servants.

He also feared that toleration would rob the church of peace:

> This toleration will not onely breede Divisions and Schismes, disturbing the peace... of Churches and Townes, by setting them who are of different families... one against another, but it will undoubtedly cause much disturbance, discontent, and divisions in the same families even betweene the nearest relations of husbands and wives, Fathers and children, brothers and sisters, Masters and Servants: The husband being of one Church, & the wife of another; the father of one, & the childe of another; the master of the Church established by Law, the servant of the tolerated; one brother of one Church, and another brother of another.... O how will this overthrow all peace... in families... weakning [sic] that fervant love in those relations![2]

Finally he foresaw that the toleration of gathered churches would encourage "libertinisme, prophanenesse, errors"; breed "Socinians, Arminians, Anabaptists, Separatists"; and "bring many men to be of no religion at all".[3]

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1. MWD, 86; Geree, Vindiciae Voti, sig. D3r.

2. Edwards, Reasons, 21f, 26.

3. Ibid, "The Epistle Dedicatory". His prediction became true during

The year 1641 was the year when the dissenting brethren had just returned to England. We can imagine how they were feeling when they confronted these anti-tolerationists, who were in the majority. So it is fully understandable that they complained:

> we have been from the first provoked... both by the common mis-understandings and mis-representations of our opinions and practises, together with incitements to this State not to allow us the peaceable practises of our Consciences, which the Reformed Churches abroad allowed us, and these edged with calumnies and reproaches cast upon our persons in print.... Books have been written by men of much worth, learning, and authority... to prepossesse the peoples minds against what are supposed our Tenets.[1]

It should be noted here that the dissenting brethren specifically underlined the word "Consciences",[2] which implied that it was for the sake of "the peaceable practises of our Consciences" that they were so concerned with the toleration issue. As to what possessed their "Consciences", they wrote elsewhere: "Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures."[3]

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the Civil Wars!

1. AN, 25.

2. According to Calvin, conscience is a kind of "knowledge" (scientia) accompanied by "a sense of divine judgment". In other words, it is the voice of God in man. See Inst., III, 19:15. Developing Calvin's view of conscience, the Elizabethan and Jacobean puritans argued that, since conscience is God's voice in man, man must respect it even when it errs. To them, it is the greatest sin to act contrary to conscience, even a mistaken conscience. For this, see The Workes of W. Perkins, II, 13: "whatsoeuer man doth, whereof he is not certenly perswaded in iudgement and conscience out of Gods word, that the thing may be done, it is sinne [Rom 14:23]." See also Ames, Conscience, I, 52: "Conscience, through errour, judging that to be lawfull... which is unlawfull, doth so farre binde...." And "Conscience judging that to be unlawfull, which is lawfull, bindeth to retraine from that lawfull thing [Rom 14:14-5]."

3. AN, 9. See also AN, 3: "we [have been]... affording no temptation to byas us any way, but leaving us as freely to be guided by that light and touch Gods Spirit should by the Word vouchsafe our consciences, as the Needle toucht with the load-stone is in the

That is to say, Scripture had a sufficiency of divine prescription of church discipline, which was binding upon their consciences. Hence to observe this prescribed discipline was God's "categorical imperative" on the one hand and man's "ought" on the other. It was for their consciences' sake that they had resigned their vicarages and taken refuge in Holland during the Laudian persecution. As they stated:

> the sinful evill of those corruptions in the publique worship and government of this Church, which all doe now so generally acknowledge and decrie, took hold upon our consciences... how impossible it was to continue in those times our service and standings, all mens apprehensions will readily acquit us. ... the evill of those superstitions adjoyned to the worship of God, which have been the common stumbling block and offence of many thousand tender consciences, both in our own and our neighbour Churches, ever since the first Reformation of Religion: which yet was enough to deprive us of the publique exercise of our Ministeries, and together therewith (as the watchfulnesse of those times grow) of our personall participation in some ordinances; and further exposed us either to personall violence and persecution, or an exile to avoid it: Which latter we did the rather choose, that so the use and exercise of our Ministeries (for which we were borne and live) might not be wholly lost, nor our selves remain debarred from the enjoyment of the Ordinances of Christ, which we account our birth-right, and best portion in this life.
> .... And we had... the greatest reason <u>to be true to our own consciences in what we should embrace</u>, seeing it was for our consciences that we were deprived at once of what ever was dear to us.[1]

Here they stated clearly that they must be true to their own consciences in what they should embrace!

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consciences, as the Needle toucht with the load-stone is in the Compasse."

1. <u>AN</u>, 2f. Italics mine.

III. Toleration: Unity without Uniformity

In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren praised the "godly personages" in Parliament for their desire "to forbeare what might any way be like to occasion or augument this unhappy difference", that is,

> to unite the Protestant partie in this Kingdome, that agree in Fundamentall Truths against Popery and other Heresies, and to have that respect to tender consciences as might prevent oppressions and inconveniences which had formerly been.[1]

It goes without saying that the desire of the politicians in Parliament was also the desire of the dissenting brethren, wherein lay the epitome of the Congregational view of toleration. In this section, we shall get down to the ideological roots of the view, and then examine the content of the view: unity without uniformity, which will be followed by a sociological approach to it.

A. Ideological Roots

As suggested above, the dissenting brethren actually desired Parliament to unite those who adhered to the fundamental beliefs and opposed Catholicism and other heresies and to show respect to tender consciences and prevent the persecution of dissent from happening. Interestingly, we can find the counterparts of these ideas in Jacobus Acontius and Dutch Remonstrants (notably Episcopius, Uytenbogaert, and Grotius).[2] The following is a comparison of their similarities:

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1. AN, 26.

2. Jacobus Acontius (d.1566) was an Italian humanist. He came to England in 1559 and attached himself to a Dutch church in London. He was the first man in England to enunciate systematically the principle of religious toleration in a book entitled Stratagemata Satanae (Basel, 1565). See DNB. According to Francesco Ruffini,

Acontius

Fundamental doctrines should be distinguished from less important doctrines. The former are essentials for man's salvation, such as the belief in the only true God; in Christ as the Son of God, and the distinction between the person of the Son and the person of the Father; Christ as the only Saviour, His incarnation, His death for man's sins and His resurrection for man's salvation; in the Holy Spirit working in the world; in man being subject to eternal damnation because of his original sin and man being ordained to eternal blessedness through Christ's atonement on the Cross; in justification by faith alone; in the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of the world; in the baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The latter are nonessentials for salvation, such as the doctrine of Communion, the belief in predestination and others. In things essential, the church authority should judge those heresy-carriers; while in things nonessential, a measure of latitude should be allowed. Whosoever adhered to the fundamental doctrines should be regarded as a brother in Christ.[1]

Doctrinal truth could not so much be absolutely attained as be relatively ascertained. Hence there should be no uniformity in faith and worship. Convictions of others should be tolerated, provided they appeared to be serious and genuine. It was wrong that the majority

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the Dutch version of Acontius' Stratagemata enjoyed immense popularity in Holland in the early part of the 17th century. Episcopius is said to have confessed that the Remonstrants were following in the footsteps of Acontius. See Francesco Ruffini, Religious Liberty (1912), 83, 98f.

1. It is obvious that, in the above statements, the belief in justification by faith alone excluded the Romanists who relied on works, while the belief in Christ as the Son of God ruled out the Socinians.

should enforce obedience upon minorities. The state, though it had to protect the church from heresy and idolatry, had no right to persecute heretics, for error could not be overcome in the heat of passion. In fact, error was the more deeply implanted by anger.

Remonstrants

All minor doctrinal differences, except for major ones, could be preserved in one and the same church, in which patience with one another in disputable articles in love was needed.

The church should not be encouraged to formulate a fixed confession, which would follow the same way as the Synod of Dort had done. Different interpretations and opinions of certain articles could be taught and discussed, for there was no unfailing interpretation of Scripture. In any event, man's conscience should be free to accept what he thought to be true. The execution of heretics must be condemned as unchristian and dreadful.[1]

Dissenting brethren

1. Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren, 71ff, 102-5; Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, I, 322-5, 339f.

Unite those who adhered to the fundamental beliefs and opposed Catholicism[1] and other heresies, and allow them a latitude in some minor differences.

Show respect to tender consciences and prevent the persecution of dissent from happening.[2]

From the above comparison, we see clearly that there was an ideological continuation from the Italian humanist via the Remonstrants to the dissenting brethren. As Gustafsson points out: "the communications which the five brethren had with their Dutch environment... imbued them not only with the ideas of Remonstrantism but also with the ideas by which the Remonstrants themselves were influenced."[3]

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1. The Roman Catholics, in the main, adhered to the fundamental beliefs. But why were the dissenting brethren so hostile to Roman Catholicism? There were several reasons: 1) The Romanists were said to endorse the works-religion. 2) The Roman Mass was believed to be "idolatry". 3) That "the Pope is Antichrist" had been regarded by Luther as an articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae. 4) A lasting hatred of Catholicism had been burned into the souls of many English men and women. The Marian persecutions, the oppressions of Alva in the Netherlands, the massacre of St Bartholomew, the attempted invasion of England by the Armada, and the conspiracy of Guy Fawkes were all remembered as if they had happened yesterday. 5) The ultra-montane priests were generally suspected of being traitors to their own country. 6) Catholicism had been looked upon as inherently unEnglish; it was the religion of Spain, their enemy country. Cf. Hill, Antichrist, 9-40; Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the Structure of a Prejudice", Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-42, eds. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (1989), 73f, 79, 82.

2. For the details of the dissenting brethren's concept of the fundamental tenets of Christianity, see infra, 308f.

3. Gustafsson, op. cit., 106. Cf. J.B. Bury, A History of Freedom of Thought (Oxford, 1952), 74.

B. Unity without Uniformity

Now the epitome of the dissenting brethren's view of toleration needs to be expanded. Our expansion of their view will be under these two heads: 1. Unity in essentials; 2. Multiformity in nonessentials.

1. Unity in essentials

As mentioned before, the dissenting brethren complained about how, since returning, they had been suspected of being "schismatics". To them this suspicion against them was simply unbearable.[1] In the Apologeticall Narration, the dissenting brethren devoted much space to illustrating their abhorrence of schism. They claimed that, although they had been provoked into attempting "to make and encrease a partie", they had borne all these provocations with patience and had constantly forborne "to publish our opinions by preaching... to print any thing of our owne... for the vindication of our selves... or to act for our selves or way". Why did they forbear from engaging in sectarian activities? Because they realised that "the second blow... makes the quarrell", and that creating a party would jeopardise the unity of "the godly Protestant party in this Kingdome that were desirous of Reformation". In order "to effect that Reformation intended, and so long contended for", they must secure the Protestant "neerest union and conjunction... against a common adversary".[2] Here they implied that they had kept the agreement at Calamy's house for as long as possible.

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1. Supra, 121f.

2. AN, 24-7.

Now we go back to the abovementioned statement of the dissenting brethren: "unite the Protestant partie in this Kingdome, that agree in Fundamentall Truths against Popery and other Heresies." It was true that the dissenting brethren could not "concur with" their Presbyterian brethren "in matters of Discipline". However they claimed that

> in matters of Discipline we are so farre from holding up the differences that occur, or making the breaches greater or wider, that we endeavour... to grant and yeeld... to the utmost latitude of our light and consciences.[1]

What they tried to say was that the difference in discipline was not a major but a minor difference, and should have not affected Protestant union. (De facto, they conceded that the disciplinary issue was not a fundamental but an adiaphoral one.)[2]

Although the dissenting brethren dissented from the Presbyterians "in matters of Discipline", yet they assented to them "in all matters of Doctrine" or "in all points of doctrine". As they stated:

> if in all matters of Doctrine, we were not as Orthodoxe in our judgements as our brethren themselves, we would never have exposed our selves to this tryall and hazard of discovery in this Assembly... the quick-sightednes of whose judgements... are such, as would be sure soon to find us out if we nourished any monsters or Serpents of opinions lurking in our bosomes.... But it is sufficiently known that in all points of doctrine (which hitherto

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1. AN, 29.

2. As mentioned before, the dissenting brethren linked church discipline with salvation. But here they did not seem to think of the disciplinary issue as a fundamental one. Was there any contradiction in their arguments? The answer is in the negative. With respect to their "light and consciences", church discipline was a matter of life and death (subjective aspect); but with respect to Protestant "union and conjunction", it became a matter of indifference (objective aspect). In fact, fundamenta and adiaphora in religion are beyond determination because they belong to the inner life. Nothing seems adiaphoral to a man who deems it fundamental, unless first of all he is convinced of its adiaphoral nature. This is but another version of the Pauline dictum that each to his own conscience must stand or fall.

> in the review and examination of the Articles of our Church... have been gone thorough) our judgements have still concurred with the greatest part of our brethren, neither do we know wherein we have dissented.[1]

Now even the concurrence "in Fundamentall Truths" was enough to serve as a basis of the Protestant union, as indicated before. How much more was the concurrence "in all matters of Doctrine" or "in all points of doctrine"![2] Accepting the same magisterium of Geneva, and sharing the common denominator of doctrine, both Congregationals and Presbyterians, as Thomas Goodwin had it, should have lived under an explicit commandment to love one another and to bear the burdens of the weak (Rom 14-15; Jn 15:12; Gal 6:2; Eph 1:15).[3]

2. Multiformity in nonessentials

When the dissenting brethren expected the magistrates to "have that respect to tender consciences as might prevent oppressions and inconveniences which had formerly been", they actually expected them to allow a great latitude of opinions or practices in nonessentials. This radical advocacy, in the eyes of the orthodox Presbyterians, would encourage the diversity of faith and thereby disturb religious peace and unity in the kingdom.[4] But, for Goodwin, the diversity of opinions or practices in nonessentials endangered in no sense the Protestant unity in essentials. He asserted that although "Saints" differed one from another in opinions or practices, yet they "being in

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1. AN, 28f.

2. By "all matters of Doctrine" or "all points of doctrine" they probably meant that they shared with the Presbyterians not only fundamentals, but also nonfundamentals, such as the belief in predestination and the doctrine of Communion.

3. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 403f.

Christ... ought not to judge or despise, but forbear one another" in charity on the principle of mutual respect. In view of this, saints must be allowed more latitude in their opinions or practices. The church must be conceived as embracing all who sincerely sought Christ, no matter how imperfectly they might apprehend His truth. Persecution of dissent served only the violation of consciences and the division of the church.[1]

The dissenting brethren's latitudinarian attitude towards nonessentials was actually a logical conclusion of their second principle: "Not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law... for the future". This principle showed that truth was dynamic rather than static, as indicated before. Goodwin in his fast sermon, Zervbbabels Encovragement, had expressed his strong resistance against the impending religious settlement in Britain, which, he thought, would occasion new divisions. He preached, based on Zechariah 4:6-9, that a degree of toleration was necessary, because this age was the "age of the Spirit", in which "the Holy Ghost... will not rest working in mens spirits, till the whole building be rightly framed." The diversity of opinions and practices would be inevitable "to the end of the world". Seeing that the Spirit would gradually guide men into all truth, there should be imposed upon men's consciences no rigid system that allowed no room for further light.[2] To put it in another way, the saint was "an inquisitive creature", who must progress by his own

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4. Supra, 246.

1. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 399-408.

2. BDBR, s.v., "Thomas Goodwin". See also Haller, "The Word of God in the Westminster Assembly", CH, XVIII, 210.

resources in the quest for knowledge. Therefore, men should not be constrained "to be of one mind... in things of lesser and doubtful moment".[1]

C. "Denominationalism"

As discussed in chapter two, the Congregationals were sociologically not of the church-type, due to their insistence on the gathered nature of the church; neither were they of the sect-type, due to their abhorrence of exclusiveness. In reality, they followed a "middle way" between "church" and "sect". This "middle way" is what modern sociologists term "denomination", whose spirit might be called "denominationalism". The following is an exploration of the Congregationals' "denominationalism", which must be preceded by the clarification of the concept of "denomination".

1. The concept of "denomination"

The word "denomination", according to W.E. Hudson, was first employed by John Goodwin, with whom the word "denomination" was equivalent to the word "way", such as the "Episcopal way", the "Presbyterial way", and the "Congregational way".[2] The word was, however, immortalised a century later by John Wesley's famous saying: "from real Christians, of whatever denomination, I earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all."[3] Sociological use of the word started

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1. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 406.

2. W.S. Hudson, "Denominationalism as a Basis for Ecumenicity: A Seventeenth Century Conception", CH, XXIV (1955), 48. See also John Goodwin, Theomachia (1644), 23.

3. Infra, 259.

with H.R. Niebuhr. Niebuhr argued that different religious connections in the United States did not fit into the church-sect dichotomy that Troeltsch had proposed in his European context. Hence Troeltsch's dichotomy must be merged into the "denomination" that combines features of both church and sect plus features growing out of the immediate situation.[1]

In general, the "denomination" differs from the "church" in that it is a discrete form, divorced from privilege and domination in society; it also differs from the "sect" in that it accommodates to the secular value of the world. Ignoring the others, we propose to fix our attention on the major distinction between "denomination" and "sect". As shown in chapter two, the sect is regarded as a group who unchurch others and claim that they <u>are</u> the Church of Christ on earth, because they own the complete "truth". By contrast, the denomination, whose members are socially more acceptable and respectable, is content to be "one member, called or denominated by a particular name, of a larger group -- the [one holy catholic] Church -- to which other denominations belong".[2] Obviously the spirit of denomination is opposed to the sectarian bigotry, uncharitableness, and exclusiveness. A man of "denomination-type" -- whoever he is, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, a Methodist, a Salvationist or even a Quaker -- upholds the principle of mutual recognition, respect, appreciation, and cooperation (open-mindedness). He maintains that a religiously diverse people, agreeing one with another in essentials

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1. H.R. Niebhur, <u>The Social Sources of Denominationalism</u> (N.Y., 1929), 19.

2. W.S. Hudson, <u>Religion in America: An historical account of the development of American religious life</u> (N.Y., 1965), 80f.

but disagreeing one with another in nonessentials, can live together in peace and unity (inclusiveness). And he allows a believer of another way to follow Christ according to his own light without condemning him (charitableness). In short, open-mindedness, inclusiveness, and charitableness are characteristic features of a "denomination".[1]

"Denominationalism" was made popular in the 18th century by leaders of the Evangelical Revival in Britain and of the Great Awakening in America. Typical of the denominational spirit was John Wesley's declaration:

> I renounce and detest all other marks of distinction. But from real Christians, of whatever denomination, I earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all. ... Dost thou love and fear God? It is enough! I give thee the right hand of fellowship.[2]

Gilbert Tennent, a Presbyterian itinerant preacher in New Jersey, stated more accurately:

> All societies who profess Christianity and retain the fundamental principles thereof, notwithstanding their different denominations and diversity of sentiments in smaller things, are in reality but one Church of Christ, but several branches (more or less pure in minuter points) of one visible kingdom of the Messiah.

For these revivalists, what was important was not which church you belonged to, but whether you were a sincere Christian or not. As Samuel Davies, another revivalist in Virginia, put it: "I would now warn you against this wretched, mischievous spirit of party.... A Christian! a Christian! Let that be your highest distinction; let that be the name which you labor to deserve."[3]

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1. For the difference between "denominationalism" and "sectarianism", see Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, 144.

2. The Works of the Reverend John Wesley (1841), VIII, 332f; quoted in Hudson, "Denominationalism", CH, XXIV, 32.

3. Quoted in Hudson, Religion in America, 81f.

2. The Congregational vision of "denominationalism"

Although denominational theory became current in the 18th century, it had actually been formulated by the dissenting brethren in the previous century. Building upon the Reformers' repeated cautions against hallowing a particular ecclesial form and upon their acceptance of the several Protestant divisions as true churches, the dissenting brethren, as we saw above, argued for a necessary diversity within a Christian unity. This reflected their vision of "denominationalism".[1]

It could be argued that the spirit of "denomination" was enshrined in the Congregationals' "most sacred law" -- their "second Principle" that they would not make their "present judgement and practice a binding law... for the future", and that they would keep a "reserve to alter and retract whatever should be discovered to be taken up out of a misunderstanding of the [biblical] rule".[2] That is to say, they possessed no absolute truth but only relative truth, and therefore they would not absolutise their present opinions and practices. This spirit runs counter to the sectarian spirit as manifested particularly in some bizarre sects or cults in America in the 19th century, who opinionatedly claimed that their charismatic gurus had conveyed to them the complete, absolute, final, and universal "truth".

Under the guidance of the second principle, the Congregationals, though they affirmed their way to be "a safe way", did not consider it the only way to Heaven. In effect, they suggested that their way was

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1. Cf. Hudson, "Denominationalism", CH, XXIV, 32f.

2. AN, 10f.

but one of the ways to Heaven. As Burton stated: "Though we are fully perswaded by Gods Word and Spirit, that this our Way is Christs way; yet wee neither doe, nor dare judge others to be reprobates, that walk not with us in it....," for "the Catholick [Church] include [sic] all the true Churches throughout the world."[1] Further, Thomas Goodwin deplored the Christian divisions and said: "for one Church to dissent from another is a grievous evill." He then expected that the time would come

> when all dissentions shall bee taken away; and when there shall bee a perfect Union of all, and not any distinction of Calvinists or Lutherans, or the like: but all shall come, and serve God, and be called by one Name.[2]

Thus the dissenting brethren readily called the Presbyterians "our brethren" or "our brethren of the Ministery".[3] In doing so, they actually desired that Congregationals and Presbyterians (both were actually the children of Geneva) should recognise rather than proscribe each other. With them, to proscribe those who differed from themselves was "an open breach of Christian love", in which consisted the nature of schism.[4] (Here the reason why they denied that they were schismatics is obvious.) Far from being schismatics, they believed that they could work together with the Presbyterians for the common

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1. Burton, A Vindication of Churches, 31, 56. Sometimes the Congregationals were broad-minded enough to be convinced that "the far greater part of men in the Kingdome [i.e., England]... will win heaven." See John Cook, What the Independents Would have (1647), 5.

2. [Goodwin], A Glimpse of Sions Glory, 28.

3. AN, 26, 28f.

4. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 399ff; infra, 304. See also AN, 24, in which "the usual grounds of all Schisme" was said to be the "spirit... of pride and singularity".

cause of Protestant reformation.[1] As to whether those who followed the Presbyterial way would be saved or not, they replied that God alone is the judge, therefore "to judge thy fellow Servants in things meerly indifferent is an intrusion upon God's proper right."[2]

It is clear that the religious establishment that the Congregationals envisaged was this: all Protestants in the kingdom, who differed from one another in nonessentials but concurred with one another in esssentials, could cooperate with one another in mutual respect and recognition.[3] Herein lay the thrust of their "denominationalism".[4]

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1. For instance, William Bridge's gathered church at Yarmouth worked together in harmony with John Brinsley's Presbyterian church in the same town. See VS, 12. In Newcastle, Congregationals and Presbyterians preached "in the same place, fasting and praying together in heavenly harmony". See Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, 365, 126; quoted in VS, 122. For the unity of both groups, see also Nuttall, "Presbyterians and Independents: Some Movements for Unity 300 years ago", The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, X (1952), 4-15.

2. Goodwin, "On Ephesians", WTG, I, 240. This position is to be seen more clearly in one of the Congregational tracts: "Who art thou, says the Apostle, that judgest another mans servant? (Rom. 14.4)... man in a religious consideration, is onely the servant of God, and he stands or falls to his owne Master. ... he receives neither his law nor his judgement from man: God accepts perhaps whom man rejects." See The ancient Bounds (1645), 32.

3. For this Congregational vision, see also [Burton], Christ on His Throne, 73f.

4. "Denominationalism" was also endorsed by some of the Presbyterians. John Paget stated that, although the Church of England and the Reformed Church in Holland "have a different order of Church-government, yet holding together the same fundamentall trueths of the Gospell, they both doe hold but one way to heaven,

IV. Complete Toleration?

Ironically, while the Congregationals in Old England were fighting for religious toleration, their counterparts in New England persecuted those who dissented from the "established" Congregational churches in Massachusetts, and for their consciences' sake, continued to be professors severally of Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Quakerism, Antinomianism and Baptist beliefs. As Baillie observed, "they perswade the magistrats to kill not only Papists and Hereticall Sects, but also many good Protestants."[1] This was true, to some extent, of the New England situation, for it was reported that three Baptists had been fined and whipped in Massachusetts under the aegis of a law passed in 1644. No wonder John Clarke (d.1676), the first Baptist preacher in America, wrote later: "while Old England is becoming new, New England is becoming old."[2] Obviously men of Congregational persuasion on both

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and so doe both mutually acknowledge one another to be in that way." See Paget, A Defence of Chvrch-Government, 161f. Charles Herle wrote in a similar vein: "for the difference betweene us and our brethren that are for Independency, 'tis nothing so great as you seemed to conceive it, we doe but (with Abraham and Lot) take severall wayes, we are as (Abraham speakes) brethren still, and (as they were) ready to rescue each other on all occasions against the common enemy; our difference 'tis such as doth at most but raffle a little the fringe, not any way rent the Garment of Christ, 'tis so farre from being a fundamentall." See Herle, Independency, sig. A1v. Obviously, for the moderate Presbyterians, the Episcopal way, the Presbyterial way, and the Congregational way were but several "ways" within the Church catholic.

1. Diss., 129. This persecution resulted in another "territorialism": the Congregationals gravitated to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Haven; the Baptists to Rhode Island; the Presbyterians to New York and New Jersey; the Catholics went to Maryland; the Quakers colonised Pennsylvania; the Episcopalians predominated in the South. Established churches prevailed everywhere save in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.

2. S.E. Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (N.Y., 1963), 25f.

sides of the Atlantic disagreed with each other in matters of toleration. The former advocated toleration; the latter opposed it. But did the Congregationals in England advocate complete toleration?

To begin with, we must find out what complete toleration meant. The idea of complete toleration or complete indifference was first expounded by Roger Williams -- "the apostle of religious liberty".[1] Williams believed that in all men of all persuasions there resides a fine devotion of conscience that is the essence of religion.[2] On this account, he thought it necessary to tolerate all men of all persuasions: "Schismatickes", "Heretickes", "Papists", "Antichristians", "Jewes", "Turkes or Pagans", "Idolaters", and "Blasphemers", provided that they did not break the "Lawes of Civil State" and "the peace thereof".[3] He was broad-minded enough to argue that if God could tolerate "the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian consciences and [false] worships", surely we could.[4] In effect, Williams pleaded not so much for "religious toleration" as for "religious liberty", which he held to be the birthright of all men,

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1. Roger Williams (d.1683), a separatist, migrated to Massachusetts in 1631. He became pastor of Salem church on Skelton's death in 1633. He was banished in 1635 by the General Court for protesting against the use of civil power to compel uniform church discipline. After that, he founded a new colony called Rhode Island, the first modern state in which church and state was entirely separated. He travelled to England in 1643 and published his The Bloudy Tenet of Persecvtion in 1644. See BDBR.

2. Jordan, op. cit., II, 504. Williams spoke admiringly of the noble death of Fr. Hartley, an Elizabethan priest, whose faith as a Catholic could not be shaken by torture and death. See ibid.

3. Roger Williams, The Bloudy Tenet of Persecvtion (n.p., 1644), 41-53, 86, 92, 107ff, 152f. Cf. idem, Qveries of Highest Consideration (1644), 8, 10, 12.

4. Williams, The Bloudy Tenet, sig. a2v; Jordan, op. cit., II, 497.

whether pagan or Christian.[1] He was convinced that "the permission of other consciences and worships... only can... procure a firme and lasting peace."[2]

If the Congregationals are said to have been more liberal-minded than their American counterparts, then we must say that they were not so progressive as Roger Williams. As mentioned before, the dissenting brethren, in line with the idea of Acontius, held that adiaphorism presupposed not only adherence to "Fundamentall Truths" but also antagonism against "Popery and other Heresies". From hence it follows that the Congregationals did not preach complete toleration or religious liberty as Roger Williams did.

The Congregationals did advocate a degree of toleration and were therefore accused by Edwards of fostering the growth of heresy.[3] Thomas Goodwin expressed the Congregational stand in declaring that "all Saints" of all persuasions in England should be allowed latitude, so long as they did not violate the fundamental tenets of Christianity. But, nevertheless, he denied his willingness to extend "this Liberty of Conscience" to "Atheists, Infidels or Mahumetans",

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1. Jordan, op. cit., II, 506. The term "religious toleration" connotes the idea that the state makes a gracious concession which it has the right to withhold; while the term "religious liberty" refers to a natural right that is given by God, and that the state has no authority to deny to any citizen. The former is something conceded (grace), which is actually an insult; while the latter is something claimed (right). Herein lies the difference between "religious toleration" and "religious liberty". See Bury, A History of Freedom of Thought, 72, 88; Ruffini, Religious Liberty, 9.

2. Williams, The Bloudy Tenet, sig. a3r.

3. Supra, 246.

"all Heresies",[1] and possibly Roman Catholics.[2] The Congregationals, like the Elizabethan puritans, even encouraged Christian magistrates to suppress all polytheists, atheists, idolaters, blasphemers, Sabbath-breakers, anti-trinitarians, and deniers of the resurrection and last judgment.[3] Jeremiah Burroughes later on made it clear that "they who are for a Congregationall way, doe not hold an absolute liberty for all Religions."[4]

On balance, the Congregationals were relatively tolerant-minded men. During the Protectorate, the Congregationals, who had possessed political power, did grant toleration to all sorts of radicals, including some eccentric sects. They even relaxed the persecution of the prelatists and recusants.[5]

Conclusion

The dissenting brethren's plea for toleration resulted, to a great extent, from their thought of Congregational church order as a soteriological issue and from the "categorical imperative" of their consciences.

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1. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 399f.

2. Goodwin did not speak clearly on the question of toleration of Roman Catholics. However he did believe that Catholicism bears "a true likeness to the Heathenish Religion". See Goodwin, "An Exposition upon the Revelation", WTG, II, 64. For Goodwin's view of toleration, see Jordan, op. cit., II, 372-6.

3. The ancient Bounds, 7f. For the Elizabethan puritans' "bloody tenet", see CS, 233, in which Cartwright is said to have insisted that flagrant idolaters be put to death.

4. Burroughes, Irenicum, 41. See also Burroughes, A Vindication... against Mr Edwards his foule Aspersions, 22: "I did not preach for an universall, an unlimited toleration of all Religions...."

5. Cross, Church and People, 214, 218; idem, "The Church in England", in Aylmer (ed.), The Interregnum, 113ff. Cf. infra, 291.

Their belief in the soteriological significance of the Congregational way originated in the puritan covenant theology. The puritans, as a matter of fact, held that the assurance of salvation practically, if not theoretically, depended upon the performance of the Ten Commandments, of which the second was concerned with church order. Observing the church order that pleased God would in effect fulfil the second commandment and thus make salvation more sure. However failure to observe the biblical church order due to shortage of "light", as Henry Jacob suggested, would not necessarily lead to eternal damnation. These views were without doubt inherited by the dissenting brethren, who believed that the Congregational way was a safe way, though not the only way to Heaven. For the dissenting brethren, following the Congregational way was not only a matter of salvation, but also a matter of conscience.

In terms of their "light and consciences", the dissenting brethren were convinced that the Congregational way was the right way for them to follow; but in terms of the Protestant "union", they actually conceded that it was but one of the ways to Heaven.

The dissenting brethren's suggestion that the Congregational way was one of the ways to Heaven was the outcome of Dutch liberal thought, by which they were influenced while they were in Holland. In order to secure Protestant unity, they followed the toleration ideas of the Remonstrants and Acontius and advocated the idea of unity without uniformity, a Congregational equivalent of Richard Baxter's dictum: "Unity in things Necessary; Liberty in things Unnecessary, and Charity in all."[1] Evidently what they envisaged was the establishment of the type of relationship among the churches in England, which had existed between their exile churches and the other Protestant churches in Holland, where they "both mutually gave and received the right hand of fellowship". The dissenting brethren's latitudinarianism showed that the Congregationals were not of the "sect-type" but of the "denomination-type".

Despite their advocacy of religious toleration, they did have bounds beyond which they would not tolerate Romanists and heretical sects. In effect, the dissenting brethren preached limited toleration, rather than complete toleration or liberty as Roger Williams did. Their antagonism against deviations from the essentials proved that they remained in the stream of the puritan thought; although their toleration of accidentals proved that they were the inheritors of the liberal thought in Holland.

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1. Richard Baxter, The Saints Everlasting Rest (1652), "The Dedication of the whole".

CONCLUSION

I. The Rise of the "Congregational Way" in the 1640s and 1650s

On the arrival of the dissenting brethren in England, according to Thomas Edwards, there were about five or six gathered churches in both England and Wales:[1] Henry Jessey's church at Southwark, Surrey (predominantly antipaedobaptist);[2] the church at Llanvaches, Monmouthshire, which, with the help of Jessey, was gathered in November 1639, with William Wroth (d.1642) as pastor, and was closely associated with the church at Broadmead, Bristol, that Wroth and his assistant, Walter Cradock (d.1659), helped form in 1640, a church where antipaedobaptists outnumbered paedobaptists;[3] the church at Dukinfield, Cheshire, formed in 1640 by Samuel Eaton (d.1665) and Timothy Taylor;[4] and Praise-God Barebones' church at Fleet Street, London, which was separated from Jessey's church, for antipaedobaptist scruples, in May 1640.[5]

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1. Edwards, Reasons, 34.

2. TS, 20; VS, 119. Henry Jessey (d.1663) succeeded John Lathrop in 1637 as pastor of the Southwark church that had been founded in 1616 by Henry Jacob. See BDBR.

3. VS, 34, 36, 119f.

4. Edwards, Gangraena, III, 164f.

5. TS, 19f; VS, 119. Praise-God Barebones (d.1679) was a key figure in the Rump Parliament. And it was after him that the Nominated Parliament of 1653 was named "Barebones' Parliament". See BDBR.

From November 1641 to the end of 1643, the Congregationals, bound by the 1641 agreement, tried to refrain from gathering churches and wait for the restructuring of the national church. For all this, some of them, nevertheless, could not help gathering churches. The earliest report of the church-gathering movement appeared in the royalist newspaper, Mercvrivs Avlicvs, which announced from Oxford in April 1643 that Henry Burton, rector of St Matthew's, Friday Street, and Dr Nathaniel Holmes (d.1678), rector of St Mary Staining, had "set up their independent Congregations" in London and "will admit no man [parishioner] unto the Sacrament, but such as are members of the same".[1] After that, according to some other documents, seven persons in Hull, under Philip Nye's influence, and William Bridge's congregation at Great Yarmouth entered into covenants in May and June respectively.[2]

After the publication of the Apologeticall Narration in 1643/4, the Congregationals, on the one hand, had no longer to keep themselves within the bounds of the agreement of silence, and on the other, had hitherto won support from all sorts of radicals, both political and religious, outside the Westminster Assembly.[3] This made them bold enough to gather churches on a large scale. Probably in early 1644, John Goodwin (d.1665) organised a gathered congregation within his own

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1. Mercvrivs Avlicvs (9-16 April 1643), 184; TS, 110; DNB, s.v., "Nathaniel Holmes".

2. R.S. Robson, "Pre-ejection Foundations", The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England, I (1917), 121; A.E. Trout, "Nonconformity in Hull", TCHS, IX (1924-26), 31; VS, 33; Browne, History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk, 210f.

3. For this, see infra, 289f.

parish church of Coleman Street.[1] In June, the Norwich brethren, who had resided in Yarmouth since returning from Rotterdam, separated from their former fellow exiles in the Yarmouth church (the mother church in East Anglia) and went back to Norwich, where they "gather into church fellowshippe"; although they had no pastor until 1647 when they secured Timothy Armitage (d.1655) as their pastor.[2] By July, three more Congregational churches in London had been formed by William Carter, Nicholas Lockyer (d.1685), and William Greenhill respectively.[3] Towards the end of the year, John Wigan (d.1665), the curate of Birch in Lancashire, is said to have persuaded the people there to adopt Congregational principles.[4] In 1645, William Bartlet (d.1682) and John Briscoe added two more gathered churches to the list of London Congregational churches: one at Wapping, Middlesex, and the other at Southwark.[5] In the same year, Henry Roote (d.1669) gathered a church, of which the future Archbishop Tillotson's father was a member, at Sowerby near Halifax, Yorkshire.[6] In 1646, Richard Worts (d.1686) and John Durant (d.1662) were reported to have founded two Congregational churches: the church in Norfolk, probably at Guestwick, and the church at a prebend's house in Canterbury.[7] Besides, John

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1. TS, 111.

2. Browne, op. cit., 214f, 161, 252f; BDBR, s.v., "Timothy Armitage".

3. Anta., 253, 301, 307; Edwards, Gangraena, II, 16; John Vicars, The Pictvre of Independency (1645), 9; TS, 95; VS, 27; BDBR, s.v., "William Greenhill".

4. Calamy Revised, s.v., "John Wigan".

5. Edwards, Gangraena, II, 16; TS, 122, 95.

6. Calamy Revised, s.v., "Henry Roote"; VS, 29n.

7. Edwards, Gangraena, III, 97, 95; "The Canterbury Church-Book", TCHS, VII (1916-18), 188.

Owen, who had recently made his pilgrimage from Presbyterianism to Congregational way after reading Cotton's Keyes, gathered a church at Coggeshall, Essex.[1]

Following Pride's Purge on 6 December 1648, Independency as a whole received governmental approval, and the toleration of gathered churches became an official policy.[2] This caused Congregational churches to mushroom in many parts of the country. For examples, on 28 December 1648, ten souls at Bury St Edmunds entered into a new covenant and formed a Congregational church, which became one of the two leading Congregational churches in Suffolk.[3] In 1649, Richard Gilpin (d.1700) organised a Congregational church at Greystoke, Cumberland.[4] Interestingly enough, in the same year, the Congregationals converted Westminster Abbey into a Congregational church with William Strong (d.1654) as pastor.[5] In 1649/50, John Philips, who had returned from New England and resumed his rectory of

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1. BDBR, s.v., "John Owen"; Yule, The Independents, 138.

2. This had actually happened a year earlier. See infra, 299.

3. Browne, op. cit., 395; G.F. Nuttall, "Congregational Commonwealth Incumbents", TCHS, XIV (1943), 160; MWD, 157.

4. BDBR, s.v., "Richard Gilpin".

5. Yule, The Independents, 22; BDBR, s.v., "William Strong".

Wrentham, Suffolk in 1642, reorganised his parish church along the Congregational lines.[1] After that, Lewis Stucley (d.1687) formed a Congregational church right in Exeter Cathedral, which was divided in two for the separate use of Congregationals and Presbyterians.[2] Another Congregational church was formed at Bedford (now known as "Bunyan Meeting") by John Gifford (d.1655), under whose influence John Bunyan (d.1688) joined the church in 1653, though he did not become its pastor until 1671.[3] In 1651/2, Thomas Larkham (d.1669), another returnee from New England, helped gather a church at Cockermouth, Cumberland, with his son George as pastor.[4] In 1655, a church at Nottingham was gathered; and so was a church at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, with John Beverley (d.1658) as pastor.[5] By September 1658 when the Savoy Conference was held, there were some 120 Congregational churches all over England.[6]

After the Restoration, between 1660 and St Bartholomew's gloomy Day of 1662, 171 known Congregational ministers were ejected.[7] Of them 28 were ejected from town lectureships, army chaplaincies, Cathedral preacherships (including preachers or lecturers at Canterbury,

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1. VS, 79; Browne, op. cit., 425f.

2. Calamy Revised, s.vv., "Lewis Stucley" and "Thomas Mall"; VS, 127.

3. VS, 37. The Bedford church was another instance of a mixture of paedobaptists and antipaedobaptists. Although the church was essentially Congregational, yet some of them, including John Bunyan, were Baptists. See VS, 36f.

4. Nuttall, "Incumbents", TCHS, XIV, 161f; VS, 93.

5. VS, 33, 38, 80.

6. Yule, The Independents, 23.

7. This figure did not include numerous Congregational pastors who were outside the Establishment. See ibid., 23.

Winchester, Bristol, Gloucester, and Durham Cathedrals); 8 from the University of Oxford (including Student of Christ Church, Fellow of Magdalen College, and Principal of Jesus College) and 5 from academic posts elsewhere (including posts in the University of Cambridge and Eton College); and 130 from parochial livings, whether rectories, vicarages or curacies, in the State Church. (Here 41 ministers were more loosely attached to the Establishment than were 131 incumbents who carried care of souls.) Although the ejected Congregational ministers were numerically weaker as compared with the other 1,738 cases of ejection (less than 10 % of the total number of ejected), yet they showed their strength in their being geographically widely spread, that is, in their appearing in all counties, especially in Norfolk (15 out of 130 incumbents), Suffolk (15/130), Gloucestershire (10/130), Devon (8/130), Cumberland (7/130), and London (8/130), except Westmorland, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, and Surrey.[1] The Congregationals showed their strength more particularly in their advocacy of religious toleration, and in their winning influential men, such as John Milton and Oliver Cromwell, to their cause.[2]

It must be noted that the Congregational churches during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth were differently formed. Some of them were formed as "private houses", "private meetings", or "church meetings" alongside the existing, but more reformed, Church of England.[3] However, being gathered churches, they, as Murray Tolmie

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1. Nuttall, "Incumbents", TCHS, XIV, 155-8; VS, 25, 26n; Yule, The Independents, 151.

2. Horton Davies, The English Free Churches (1963), 85.

3. Diss., 123; Anta., 51, 222, 243f, 268.

points out, "did not deny the validity of Christian worship in the parishes, nor the legitimacy of parochial reformation". They were sure "in all sincerity that they were not guilty of schism." This was indeed true not only of Greenhill's gathered church at Stepney, whose members also attended the morning lectures given by their own pastor in a parish church in 1645, but also of the congregations at Bristol and Bury St Edmunds, who, having no pastors from 1645 till 1651 and from 1646 to 1656 respectively, regularly attended the "public" services to hear vicars or rectors preach on Sundays.[1]

Some Congregational churches were, however, formed as gathered groups within the parochial framework. This occurred particularly during the Commonwealth when church order was more relaxed. The compromise between the gathered church and the State Church during the Commonwealth was in effect previewed by Henry Burton, Dr Holmes, John Goodwin, and Thomas Brooks (d.1680) during the Civil Wars, who held both pastoral office and parochial living at the same time. Burton, while holding the meetings of his gathered church at his home, also held the rectory of St Matthew's. Dr Holmes, however, differed from Burton in having his gathered church meet in his parish church. Goodwin, while preaching openly in his parish church, offered sacraments only to the gathered members, probably in his own house. This may have been followed by Thomas Brooks, who, after being appointed rector of St Margaret's, New Fish Street in 1648, administered communion to the "godly party" only, not to the parishioners whom he judged to be unworthy.[2] It was not until 1649

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1. TS, 98, 120; VS, 82; Edwards, Gangraena, I, 79f.

2. TS, 110, 112, 118, 245.

when Cromwell became the patron of Independency that a large number of Congregational pastors began to apply their ecclesial principles within the Established Church on a large scale, and they thus became by appointment Congregational incumbents of parish churches. For examples, John Durant held the rectory of St George's, Canterbury, while he was pastor of a prebend's house.[1] Joseph Caryl combined the parsonage of St Magnus with the pastorate of a gathered church in the parish.[2] John Gifford held the Congregational pastorate together with the parochial benefice of St John's, Bedford.[3] Richard Worts combined the pastorate of a gathered church with the rectory of Foulsham with Themelthorpe, Norfolk. George Larkham was both pastor and curate at Cockermouth.[4] William Greenhill combined the pastorate of his flock with the vicarage of Stepney. George Cokayn (d.1691) combined the rectory of St Pancras, Soper Lane, with the pastorate of a gathered church that met in the parish.[5] And Thomas Allen (d.1673) held the rectory of St George Tombland while he was the second pastor of the Norwich church.[6] The reason why a large number of Congregational ministers accepted benefices within the Established Church and thus combined their gathered churches with the Establishment was that they found it their evangelical duty to convert the elect by preaching to those within the territorial churches who were neither fit nor willing

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1. Calamy Revised, s.v., "John Durant".

2. VS, 40; TS, 117, 224.

3. BDBR, s.v., "John Gifford".

4. Calamy Revised, s.v., "Richard Worts"; Nuttall, "Incumbents", TCHS, XIV, 161f.

5. TS, 107; VS, 40.

6. Nuttall, "Incumbents", TCHS, XIV, 158.

to become members of a gathered church.[1]

The rapid growth of the Congregational churches from the late 1640s till 1660 was, to a large extent, indebted to the huge impact of the Apologeticall Narration upon the English society after 1643/4, which is to be discussed later.

II. The "Congregational Way": Its Tenets and Sources

A. The Tenets of the "Congregational Way"

R.S. Paul has rightly pointed out that "the main lines in the future Anglo-Saxon developments of the Congregational Way were all implicit in the Apologeticall Narration."[2] To put it more concretely, the Apologeticall Narration was the source from which the Congregational thought in England ran through the works of John and Thomas Goodwin, Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bartlet, and John Owen, to the Savoy Declaration (1658), the Heads of Agreement (1691) (the "paper union" between Presbyterians and Congregationalists), and further to the English Declaration (1833).[3] In view of this, it is necessary for us to evaluate the tenets of the Congregational way as revealed in the Apologeticall Narration, which may be summarised as these: 1. the visible sanctity of church membership; 2. non-separatism; 3. the

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1. TS, 97, 101, 110; VS, 134.

2. Paul, An Apologeticall Narration, 55.

3. For Heads of Agreement and English Declaration, see Walker, The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, 455-62, 551f. The tract was also the source from which New England Congregational defences flowed through the works of Cotton, Welde, and Hooker to the Cambridge Platform. Cf. supra, 43f.

supremacy of the local church (the Congregational "shibboleth"); 4. The "Congregational" model of the primitive church; 5. the free interpretation of the Bible; and 6. religious toleration.

1. The visible sanctity of church membership

The Congregationals disagreed with the Presbyterians over what kind of person could be admitted to the church. The Presbyterians thought of the visible church as a comprehensive society like the Ark of Noah including both the clean and the unclean, although they restricted Communion to the godly among the parishioners.[1] For the Congregationals, however, the visible church was a "gathered" group consisting of none but covenanted saints who bore visible effects of grace. Hence their emphasis on the admission of "the better part" and the truly "faithful". This seems to deny the Augustinian distinction between the visible and invisible churches. But, nevertheless, they did not anabaptistically assert that Christian perfection in this world could be attainable. As a matter of fact, they required of the applicants for church membership only the "imperfect holiness" as manifested in "the meanest" work of grace.

2. Non-separatism

The dissenting brethren laid much stress on the point that the Congregationals were by no means a sect. First, they did not advocate radical separation of the church from the state. On the contrary, they expected the state to reform the church. Their position was sandwiched between that of the Presbyterians who expected the state to establish

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1. [Henderson], Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, 13.

the church and that of Roger Williams who expected the state to divorce the church.[1] The extent of their reliance on the magistrate was, however, revealed in 1652, when, in the Humble Proposals, Congregational ministers supported the state's supervision of parochial Congregational churches and their incumbents.[2] Secondly, while they wanted churches to be covenantedly gathered, the Congregationals did not resist the idea that voluntarily gathered churches could be created within the reformed Church of England. They, as we have seen, did put this idea into practice during the Commonwealth; although, after the Restoration, particularly after the Act of Uniformity (1662), they, together with their Presbyterian brethren, were forced to become in practice a dissenting sect. Thirdly, they did not deviate from the Reformed Churches in both worship and ministry. In the light of these, their via media between church and sect can be categorised sociologically as "denomination".

It must be added here that the Congregational non-sectarian tradition was inherited by the Victorian Congregationalists, who were so catholic-minded as to find room in either the niches or the stained-glass windows of Mansfield College chapel in Oxford for the saints, both East and West, both Catholic and Reformed, such as Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Tertullian, Athanasius, Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, Basil of Cappadocia, Patrick, Gregory the Great, Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas, Scotus, Francis, Wycliffe, Huss, Erasmus, Luther,

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1. Williams, Queries of Highest Consideration, 2 et passim.

2. F.J. Powicke, "The Independents of 1652", TCHS, IX (1924-6), 22-5; infra, 308. See also Browne, op. cit., 165: "The pastors in most cases received their maintenance from the public funds, and chiefly from tithes; though in some gathered churches the congregations supported the ministry."

Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin, Tyndale, Cranmer, Beza, Knox, Cartwright, Richard Hooker, Grotius, Henderson, Twisse, Thomas Goodwin, Williams, Milton, Cromwell, Owen, Baxter, Bunyan, Eliot, John Howe, Penn, Watts, Jonathan Edwards, Doddridge, Whitefield, Wesley, Schleiermacher, Thomas Chalmers, Livingston, Elizabeth Fry, James Legge, and so on.

3. The supremacy of the local church

For the Congregationals, the particular congregation is not a fraction of the Church catholic, but a microcosm thereof. To put it more bluntly, it *is*, within its own range, the catholic Church. In this "catholic Church", elders and brethren shared the ecclesial power. This practice differed from that of the sectaries and some of the Separatists, who thought that it was the brethren, not the elders, that held the power. It also differed from that of the Presbyterians who believed that only the presbytery of elders could exercise the power. Hence Goodwin and Nye asserted that their way was

> That very *Middle-way*... between... *Brownisme*, and the *Presbyteriall-government*... whereof the one... put the chiefe... of the rule... into the hands of the people, and drowns the *Elders'* votes... in the major part of theirs: And the other, taking... the principall parts of that rule (which we conceive is the due of each *Congregation*, the *Elders* and *Brethren*) into this Jurisdiction of a common *Presbyterie* of severall *Congregations*, doth thereby... swallow up, not onely the interests of the people, but even the votes of the *Elders* of that *Congregation*.[1]

Although the Congregationals upheld the principle of supremacy of the local church, they did not hesitate to use the "synod". But this synod, in their perspective, did not function as an arrogant hierarchy (sacred-rule), but a humble hierodule (sacred-service). It should not

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1. Goodwin & Nye, "To the Reader", in Cotton, *Keyes*, sig. A4r.

authoritatively censure an erring individual or church, but give brotherly counsel and admonition instead, so that the erring individual or church could thereby be convinced.[1]

The Congregational middle-way between Presbyterianism and Brownism, in effect, reflected the continuation of the Reformation problem of authoritative jurisdiction in the Church and the liberty of believers to interpret the Bible for themselves. The Congregationals on the one hand saw in Presbyterianism the repressive nature of coercive power, and on the other saw in Brownism popular anarchy. To avoid these two, they advocated the principle of a local church first, a synod second, and the principle of a proper division of power within the local church, which were both very revolutionary at that time. Their purpose was to prevent the right of independent judgment of the local church from being violated by too rigid a hierarchy.

4. The "Congregational" model of the primitive church

The Congregationals firmly believed that their church polity was precisely laid down in the New Testament and hence paradigmatic to all ensuing ages. The same conviction was equally held by the

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1. Unlike their New England counterparts, who tended to be more and more synod-oriented, as was revealed particularly in the Saybrook Platform (1708), the English Congregationalists, owing to the persecution after 1660 that made it entirely unlikely for synods or associations to function, had to emphasise the discipline of an individual church. (In the situation after 1660, even English Presbyterians became more and more "Congregational", as was manifested in the Heads of Agreement.) Even after the Glorious Revolution, associations were still largely neglected. It was not until 1808, when the Congregational churches grew in number as a result of the Wesleyan Revival, that closer unity and cooperation were found to be necessary. Eventually the Congregational Union of England and Wales, advisory, rather than judicial, was formed in 1833, with its HQ at Blomfield Street, Finsbury Circus, London. See Walker, op. cit., 495, 507f, 510, 514, 442ff, 446ff, 543-6.

Presbyterians, the Anglicans, and even the Romanists.[1] Here, one and the same Bible, it seems, could be interpreted differently and manipulated in their respective interests by different factions. None the less, history seems to have made it more and more clear that there is no single church polity in Scripture with divine authority and monopoly, and that different polities emphasise complementary aspects of the great Redemption they serve. As Karl Barth says:

> No Church order is perfect, for none has fallen directly from heaven.... Even the orders of the primitive New Testament community... were not perfect, nor are those of the Western Papacy, the Eastern Patriarchate, the Synodal Presbyterianism... Anglican, Methodist, Neo-Lutheran and other forms of Episcopacy, or Congregationism.... There is no reason to look down proudly and distastefully from one to the others.[2]

Probably because of this, the modern English Congregationalists with ecumenical bent modified their forefathers' position and joined forces with the English Presbyterians in the United Reformed Church in 1972. They seemed to believe that Congregational polity is desirable, but not necessarily jure divino, let alone something to do with salvation.

5. The free interpretation of the Bible

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1. The Romanists believed that papacy was biblically prescribed. As Boniface VIII in his Unam Sanctam had stated: "for the Lord said to Peter himself, 'Feed My sheep' [Jn 21:17]. 'My sheep' He said in general, not these or those sheep; wherefore He is understood to have committed them all to him. Therefore, if the Greeks or others say that they were not committed to Peter and his successors, they necessarily confess that they are not of Christ's sheep, for the Lord says in John, 'There is one fold and one shepherd.' [Jn 10:16]" See Documents of the Christian Church, ed. Henry Bettenson (Oxford, 1963), 160.

2. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, eds. G.W. Bromiley & T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh, 1936-69), IV, 2: 718.

While believing that their Congregational polity was biblically prescribed, the Congregationals, nevertheless, on the basis of their eschatology, upheld the principle of freedom in the interpretation of the Bible and were reluctant to make their present judgment a binding authority for the future. This allowed room for "further light". It is worth pondering the words of Timothy Armitage, the first Congregational pastor at Norwich: "does all truth come into the world at once? and may not we persecute that which afterwards may appear to be a truth?... with what right can they force anothers judgment, anothers conscience?"[1] No doubt, the Congregationals believed that the spiritual truth was dynamic and expansive. Accordingly the church should not be always the same (semper eadem), but be always being reformed (semper reformanda). This Congregational vision, to a great extent, created later Protestant sectarianism. As Thomas Edwards remarked, the principle of making no present judgment and practice a binding law for the future but reserving a right to alter and retract was

> excellent for unstable men... that love no fixed nor setled government, and serves well to the humour of a few particular persons, but pernitious and sad for Nationall Churches and Kingdomes... a good back doore to go out at from Brownisme to Anabaptisme, and from Anabaptisme to Sebaptisme, and from thence to Famialisme and Socinianisme; It is ready prepared way for those that would draw men into errours under the pretence of new light... and so to lead men from one errour to another till there be no end.[2]

On the other hand, however, the Congregational openness in outlook also led later Congregationalists to the theological and social liberalism and to active participation in the ecumenical movement.

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1. Timothy Armitage, The Son of God Walking in the Fire with the Servants of God (1656), 119.

2. Anta., 85. Italics mine.

6. Religious toleration

The Congregationals advocated toleration of those who dissented from the Established Church in accidentals but assented to it in fundamentals, which challenged the conventional Presbyterian, actually Continental, idea, cuius regio eius religio.[1] They stated clearly that "We took measure of no mans holinesse by his opinion, whether concurring with us, or adverse unto us." By this they actually meant that what was important was not a man's different "judgement, in things of lesser consequence and moment", but his "good evidence and testimony of... upright conversation".[2] Here they conveyed the idea that religious diversity in things circumstantial should be allowed, for a monolithic uniformity is neither desirable nor attainable. This idea contributed greatly to the formation of the later Cromwell's comprehensive Establishment, in which Congregationals, Presbyterians, and Baptists participated, though they differed one from another in nonessentials. It should be pointed out, however, that the Congregationals actually advocated a limited toleration for orthodox

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1. Cf. [Henderson], op. cit., 17.

2. AN, 12; Bartlet, 'IXNOYPAPHIA, 75. See also The Savoy Declaration (1658), "A Preface", in Walker, op. cit., 357: "amongst all... Churches, there ought to be vouchsafed a forbearance and mutual indulgence unto Saints of all perswasions, that keep unto... the necessary foundations of faith and holiness...." This can be illustrated by the fact that the churches at Bury St Edmunds and Bedford admitted a few antipaedobaptists without requiring paedobaptism as a condition of membership, and that Jessey's church at Southwark and the Bristol church, though predominantly antipaedobaptist, made believers' baptism a private, rather than a church matter. See VS, 119f; Diss., 120; BDBR, s.v., "John Bunyan". The Congregationals were tolerant enough to admit into their fellowship not only Christians of other church orders, but sectaries and Anabaptists as well, provided they were "the children of truth in the maine". See The ancient Bounds, 11; Diss., 120; TS, 120f.

Calvinists, notwithstanding their temporary desires for a full toleration of all sects in 1645, which was not from their theological insights but out of a political and military concerns.[1]

B. The Sources of the "Congregational Way"

Having examined the tenets of the Congregational way, we seek to find out why the Congregational way arose in England in the 1640s and 1650s. In the sequence of cause and effect nothing can happen without being occasioned by other factors. Such being the case, the rise of the Congregational way must not be conceived as an isolated historical event, but must be linked with its ideological roots and international influence.

1. Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism

As we have shown, many Congregational ideas, such as the visibility of the saints, non-separatism, Congregational discipline, restitutionism, the "further light" argument, and the soteriological significance of church polity, had already existed in Elizabethan and Jacobean puritan literature. Seen in this light, the Congregational ecclesiology was not original but a continuation of that of the puritans. As the Savoy Declaration stated later:

> we are able to trace the footsteps of an Independent Congregational Way in... a full concurrence throughout in all the substantial parts of Church-Governments, with our Reverend Brethren the old Puritan non-Conformists... and we reap with joy, what [was] sowed in tears. [on the right margin: "by Dr. Ames... Greenham, Cartwright, Venner, Fulk, Whitaker... Perkins, &c."][2]

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1. For this, see infra, 289f, 302, 304, 308f.

2. The Savoy Declaration, "A Preface", in Walker, op. cit., 366.

What the Congregationals had done was only to absorb "congregational" elements from Elizabethan and Jacobean puritanism, and then develop them into full-blooded Congregationalism. For example, as we have seen, in Elizabethan puritan ecclesiology, church power was ordinarily grounded in local consistories; but, at the same time, a hierarchical structure was also devised for managing matters of moment. In Jacobean puritan ecclesiology, there was reserved a "synod" that could be understood as a kind of "church", although it had no actual authority. Now in Congregational ecclesiology, a local congregation was the "church", and a synod was totally on a par with the local congregation. There was no distinction between "Temple of Jerusalem" and "synagogues", as the Jacobean puritans had made.

2. Dutch Congregationalism

The Congregational way in England owed much to the free environment of Holland. In Holland -- their "Patmos" -- the dissenting brethren could pursue more extensively their inquiries about church order and study the principle and practice of the primitive church. As they declared,

> wee were cast upon a further necessity of enquiring into and viewing the light part, the positive part of Church-worship and Government; And to that end to search out what were the first Apostolique directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament.[1]

It was in Holland that they arrived at the conclusions that they afterwards clearly stated and ably defended in the Apologeticall Narration. This means that the dissenting brethren, except Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye who had become Congregationals through Cotton's

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1. AN, 3.

influence,[1] were originally not Congregationals. They came to Holland not because of their Congregational beliefs, but because of their nonconformity to the Laudian innovations. But when they went back to England, they became out-and-out Congregationals.[2]

Why did they leave England as nonconformists and go back home as Congregationals? As mentioned, Holland was a liberal country, where they were able to experiment freely with what they had inherited from the puritan literature, whose "congregational" elements, they believed, were in accord with the New Testament church pattern. As a result of this experiment, Congregational economy proved workable, for they had practised a non-separating principle by steering between the Scylla of Brownism and the Charybdis of Presbyterianism, and had successfully used the "synod". The dissenting brethren's Dutch experience played an important part in forming their Congregational ideas.

The Congregational idea of religious toleration should also be attributed to the liberal thought in that bourgeois republic. There, they were imbued with the progressive ideas of latitudinarianism, which had been enunciated by Jacobus Acontius and the Dutch Arminians. It was this enlightened spirit that differentiated them from their counterparts in Massachusetts Bay, who had been rarely nurtured by what we now call "bourgeois liberalisation", and still stuck to the old-fashioned formula, cuius regio, eius religio, and suppressed all the other versions of Christianity.[3]

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1. Supra, 6f.

2. Gustafsson, The Five Dissenting Brethren, 19.

3. For the two Englands' divergence over the issue of toleration, see Perry Miller, Errand Into the Wilderness (N.Y., 1956), 13, 144ff.

3. New England Congregationalism

While rejecting the New Englanders' bigotry, the Congregationals in England learned a great deal from their Congregational practices. As indicated before, New England Congregationalism derived, ecclesiologically, also from a rich heritage of Elizabethan and Jacobean nonconformity.[1] During the Great Migration to Massachusetts in the 1630s, the puritan immigrants took their "congregational" ideas to the unspoiled New England. In that tabula rosa, they experimented with and developed these ideas. In the end, they made Massachusetts Colony a bulwark of Congregational orthodoxy, and thus created a perfect working model and sampler of Congregational polity for their mother country. (There was no fully satisfactory church pattern for Congregationals in England, in fact or in writing, before the emergence of New England churches.) Because of this, many Englishmen began to seek counsels from them through correspondence. No wonder John Cotton remarked proudly that New England Congregationalism

> hath been... a testimony from Heaven of Gods blessing upon our way, that many thousands in England in all the Quarters of the Kingdome, have been awakened to consider of the cause of Church discipline... and have therefore by letters conferred with us about it, & been... so farre enlightned [sic].[2]

Therefore, it could be argued that the New Englanders exported what they had imported from England back to England.

Altogether, the Congregational way in England was the outcome of Elizabethan and Jacobean puritan ecclesiology. None the less, its actual rise in England in the 1640s and 1650s was due to both Dutch

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1. Supra, 42.

2. Cotton, The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared, 102.

Congregational experiment and New England Congregational repercussions. As Robert Baillie observed, the Congregational way "growes in New-England and Holland" and later "it is transplanted to Old-England". Or in the words of the modern historian, Michael Watts, "the Congregational Churches set up in England in the 1640s were the inheritors of an ecclesiastical system which had been tried and developed in the Netherlands and New England during the previous decade."[1]

III. The Impact of the Apologeticall Narration

Apart from the immediate consequences of the Apologeticall Narration we mentioned at the beginning, we cannot help asking: what was the long-term impact of the tract upon the later historical process in England?

The Apologeticall Narration achieved its significance that was out of all proportion to its size, for it planted the seeds of toleration of sects and schisms; although the fruits after 1660 were no longer visible until 1689. Hence the importance of the tract is to be assessed in terms of its contribution to the development of religious toleration in England in both practice and theory.

A. Its Impact upon Cromwell's Religious Policy

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1. Diss., 90; MWD, 168.

The Apologeticall Narration resulted in a chain of events that brought to naught, step by step, the Scots' dream of a Presbyterian theocracy in England, and established, step by step, a Cromwellian broad-church Establishment, within which there was no centralised body imposing uniform discipline, jurisdiction, and organisation throughout the country as desired by orthodox Presbyterians, but room for a wide variety of practices and modes of discipline. But how was this achieved?

First of all, in submitting their apology to Parliament, the dissenting brethren actually spread the debate over the toleration issue from the Assembly to Parliament, the army, and the forum of public discussion, and thus opened what Francesco Ruffini calls "a new era" in toleration history. Their outcry for toleration and against Scottish theocracy almost immediately struck a strong resonant chord amongst both religious sects and political radicals or Erastians, who, having now been given a platform of protest, sought to expand the dissenting brethren's relatively conservative position in regards to toleration into a demand for general toleration of all sects then combining into Independency. Thus the publication of the tract almost insensibly gave rise to a powerful movement for religious toleration with the dissenting brethren in the Assembly and their supporters in Parliament as its religious and political leaders. In this movement, with the increasing political pressures, with their own future becoming more and more linked to the triumph of Cromwell's sectarian army, and with the approaching settlement of Presbyterianism in 1646, the dissenting brethren themselves, who had in their apology carefully restricted toleration to themselves (actually accommodation), had now in 1645 to extend this particular plea to general toleration. Their

shift from considering accommodation in the Establishment to pressing for toleration (though the extent of the toleration for which they were pressing was not yet revealed) necessitated increasing identification of themselves with the sects and the army's religious "enthusiasts".[1]

The dissenting brethren's outcry for toleration was echoed not only by the sectarians and radical politicians but also by Dr Jeremy Taylor (1613-67), a learned Anglican divine and future Bishop of Down and Connor, who wrote his Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying (1647) during the troubled period. In this 267-page treatise, Dr Taylor argued that, except for the Apostles' Creed that had been professed as the fundamentals of Christianity by all Christians down the centuries, all doctrines, particularly those purely "speculative", had been changeable with the passage of time, and hence uncertain, disputed, and variously understood and "determined". In matters of religion, he asserted, "Reason is the Judge" and "probablity is our guide". It was then concluded that room for a variety of opinions should be allowed, and that no one who "lives a good life" should be judged as a heretic.[2]

The year 1649 saw the beginning of official toleration for gathered churches, which marked the decline of presbytery but the encouragement of Independency. In order to clarify the Congregational stand on toleration, John Owen, the intellectual leader of the Congregationals, produced in 1648/9 a treatise, Of Toleration, in

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1. Jordan, op. cit., III, 369ff; Haller, Liberty and Reformation, 116-9; idem, "The Word of God", CH, XVIII, 200, 213; Ruffini, Religious Liberty, 164; Paul, The Assembly of the Lord, 127, 387.

2. Jeremy Taylor, A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying (1647).

which he maintained that all Protestants should be free to worship God as their consciences bade them, provided in so doing they did not disturb the public peace.[1] However, Owen developed the position as defined in the Apologeticall Narration by adding that this toleration could allow non-fundamental error, into which the believer might stumble on the path to salvation, but not fundamental error (heresy).[2] This distinction was later adopted by Cromwell and the Savoy Declaration as an official Congregational policy.[3] Undoubtedly, this toleration was still limited.

Cromwell in the speech with which he dissolved the first Protectorate Parliament in January 1654/5, hinted at his willingness to grant "liberty of conscience" to all orthodox Christians, who were "different in judgment in some lesser matters", but not to the profane and blasphemers, notably Socinians, who denied the deity of Christ, and Quakers, who seemed to deny the historical Jesus.[4] For all this, the Lord Protector personally treated generously Socinians, Quakers, other strange and fanatical sects, and even prelatists and recusants.[5] However, in September 1656, as a result of James Nayler (d.1660), second only to George Fox (d.1691) as a Quaker leader, leading his followers into Bristol in July in the manner of Christ's entry into

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1. H.R.F. Bourne, Life of John Locke, I (1876), 75.

2. Blair Worden, "Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate", Studies in Church History, XXI (1984), 207, 209.

3. The Savoy Declaration, "A Preface", in Walker, op. cit., 356ff.

4. W.C. Abbott (ed.), The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), 586, 436, 459; John Morrill et al. (eds.), Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution (N.Y., 1990), 195; Worden, "Toleration", Studies in Church History, XXI, 218.

5. Jordan, op. cit., III, 219.

Jerusalem, Cromwell made it crystal clear at the opening of the second Protectorate Parliament that he, like Owen, wanted liberty of conscience only for God's "peculiar", notably Presbyterians, Congregationals, and Baptists, whatever their views on church government might be, not for blasphemers, notably Socinians and Quakers, and persuaded the House to accept the distinction between error and heresy and to provide protection for the former while it outlawed the latter.[1] This policy was presently hinted at in the religious provisions of the Humble Petition and Advice (May 1657), the new parliamentary constitution, which were markedly less tolerant than their parallel provisions of the old constitution, the Instrument of Government (December 1653). For in the former the Confession of Faith was "recommended" to the nation, and not only "Popery or Prelacy" but also heresies, particularly Socinians' anti-trinitarianism and Quakers' anti-scripturalism, were proscribed; while in the latter, only "Popery or Prelacy" and "licentiousness" were outlawed.[2]

B. Its Impact upon Locke's Theoretical Defence of Toleration

The Apologeticall Narration, which, as we have seen, inaugurated a long-standing controversy over toleration, may, through Dr Taylor and Dr Owen, Dean of Christ Church, have had some bearing on John Locke, the young Christ Church undergraduate, whose toleration theory shaped

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1. Worden, "Toleration", Studies in Church History, XXI, 222f, 211f, 218; Morrill et al. (eds.), op. cit., 196, 255; Abbott (ed.), op. cit., IV (1947), 272.

2. S.R. Gardiner, The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660 (Oxford, 1958), 416, 454f; Worden, "Toleration", Studies in Church History, XXI, 227.

modern Great Britain.[1] However the tract may also have influenced Locke through the toleration thought of Thomas Goodwin, President of Magdalen College, who had developed some of his toleration ideas in the tract in his other treatises.

Probably influenced by the Baconian scientific spirit of enquiry, Goodwin, in his Apologeticall Narration, endorsed the spirit of "enquiry" in matters of religion, along with which was coupled private judgment, the "further light" argument, and the right to dissent.[2] This, however, resulted in a chain of arguments for a "critical" or non-dogmatic approach, a doctrine of individual judgment, and religious toleration. In one of his treatises, Goodwin, though he fell short of the Cartesian bold assertion that reason could obtain full knowledge, believed that man's own faculty of reason, albeit its "frailty" or "Corrupt Nature", could be used as a necessary tool to "make clear" and "confirm" his religious convictions, and that "Knowledge" derived from the "connate" ideas, "sown even in the Minds of Children", through the working of "Reason and Observation".[3] Hence it was recognised in another treatise of his that all Christian opinions and practices dissenting from the pretence of official orthodoxy possessed at least some elements of truth. On this ground, Christian charity and mutual understanding should make it possible for different sects to live together within the framework of a

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1. For Owen's influence on Locke who began his student life at Christ Church, Oxford in 1652, see Bourne, op. cit., I, 72-5; VS, 76f.

2. AN, 3ff, 10-5, 17f, 22f.

3. Thomas Goodwin, "Of the Creatures, and the Condition of Their State by Creation", WTG, II, 40-44; AN, 9ff.

comprehensive Church of England. For Thomas Goodwin, spiritual vitality based on habitual enquiry was, however, much better than a dead and formal uniformity.[1]

The intuition of the President of Magdalen College may have contributed to the "rational" or latitudinarian approach of Locke to the problem of religious toleration, which would rule the outlook of the coming age. Probably encouraged by his patron, Lord Ashley, later Earl of Shaftesbury,[2] Locke composed in 1667 his "Essay concerning Toleration",[3] the forerunner of the later Letter concerning Toleration, written in Latin in 1685 and published in English in the spring of 1689. In this "Essay", Locke wrote that, except for papists, who might threaten the security of the state, men of all religious persuasions, whose "purely speculative" opinions and divine cultus did not prompt them to threaten the peace of the state, deserved toleration. The king could interfere in nothing except what was concerned with the civil peace and public safety in this world (political principle).[4] Monarchy was thus deprived of its sacred duty, and given a purely secular one; this obviously conflicted with the Tory and high Anglican ideal, but was supported by Shaftesbury and his Whig party, who believed that toleration was neccessary for trade. In 1671, Locke started to draft his masterpiece, An Essay concerning

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1. Goodwin, "Of the Constitution", WTG, IV, 399-402, 406f; Jordan, op. cit., III, 372, 375f. Cf. supra, 266ff, 304, 255ff.

2. Lord Ashley (d.1683) was a forceful champion of religious toleration. He vehemently opposed the Clarendon Code. See DNB, s.v., "Anthony Ashley Cooper".

3. This unpublished treatise is quoted in full in Bourne, op. cit., I, 174-94. It must be kept in mind that Locke used the term toleration to indicate both "toleration" and "liberty".

4. Bourne, op. cit., I, 175-8, 183, 187f.

Humane Understanding (1690), in which he explored the workings of the human mind. In the chapters where he discussed Probability and Degrees of Assent, Locke, who believed liberty of thought to be essential to every man, stressed that a man has a duty to "examine" critically the "Certainty" of what he has been taught to believe (intellectual principle), and that, in cases where uncertainty is "unavoidable", mutual charity and tolerance are needed, so that "peace... and friendship" can be maintained "in the diversity of Opinions". Locke actually came near the point of view that religious truth may be many-sided rather than the belief that there is a single religious truth that human reason liable to error can indubitably achieve.[1] Locke's liberal thought, according to H.R.F. Bourne, may have had a "direct or indirect share" in the toleration bill that was submitted to the Convention Parliament in March 1689 and was passed on 24 May as the Toleration Act, whereby Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers (but not Romanists and Unitarians) could worship legally, although they were still excluded from political and educational privileges.[2]

The impact of the Apologeticall Narration on the later development of religious toleration that helped shape the modern world lies in these two directions. First, in their presenting the Congregational way, which they thought to be at least equally jure divino, to Parliament as an alternative to the jure divino presbytery, the authors of the Apologeticall Narration in fact shattered the Westminster Assembly

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1. John Locke, An Essay concerning Humane Understanding (1690), Book IV, chapters 15-16.

2. Bourne, op. cit., II, 152.

divines' cherished dream based upon their biblicism that if Scripture could be approached with sincerity, a single and unified view of the church would emerge on which all honest Christians could agree. This seemed to indicate that the time had gone when English life could be enclosed within a single ecclesiastical framework, and that Protestant pluralism in English society would destroy for good the principles of uniformity hitherto carefully preserved by the Church of England. Second, in their pleading for religious toleration, which related closely to their spirit of free "enquiry" with a strong eschatological overtone, they inadvertently paved the way for the later religious indifference, rationalism, liberalism, scepticism, deism, works-religion, humanism, secular society, ecumenical movement (in the sense that all religions are more or less ways to Heaven), materialism, and ultimately atheism, by which John Owen, the "Calvin" of England, and the dissenting brethren themselves would certainly have been appalled, with the words of the arch-bigot, Thomas Edwards, ringing in their ears: "Toleration alone" would "set open a wide gate to all error[s]", such as Socinianism, Arminianism, "Blasphemies", and "licentiousnesse", and would eventaully "bring many men to be of no religion at all"![1] In conclusion, in their battle against authoritarian church government and against religious conformity, Thomas Goodwin and his colleagues in their Apologeticall Narration contributed to the establishment of one significant tradition for the modern man: the tradition of dissent.

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1. Edwards, Gangraena, III, 233; idem, Reasons, "The Epistle Dedicatory".

APPENDIX

I. Politics and Wars in England (1644-1648)

In order to show readers what happened politically and militarily after the publication of the Apologeticall Narration, it is necessary to give some short account of the politics and wars in England between 1644 and 1648. The following account is based on George Yule, The Independents in the English Civil War (1958); Lawrence Kaplan, "English Civil War Politics and the Religious Settlement", Church History, XLI (1972); Lawrence Kaplan, Politics and Religion during the English Revolution: The Scots and the Long Parliament 1643-45 (1976); George Yule, Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament, 1640-47 (1981); Robert Ashton, Reformation and Revolution 1558-1660 (1984); R.S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate" (1985); Derek Hirst, Authority and Conflict: England 1603-58 (1986); John Morrill (ed.), The Impact of the English Civil War (1991).

This account begins with Cromwell's rise in January 1643/4, when he was named Lieutenant-General or cavalry commander to the Earl of Manchester, the commander of the Eastern Association, which coincided with the rise of the new regime at Westminster under Henry Vane. The new leaders of the middle party, Lord Saye in the Lords and Oliver St John in the Commons, in alliance with the more militant Vane, established the committee of both kingdoms, of which Cromwell was a member. With the creation of this committee on 17 February, Scotland officially entered the war. Now Independency was beginning to gain a hold on the army, although as yet it seemed to be confined to the army of the Eastern Association, who were sympathetic to the cause of religious toleration. Cromwell was known to favour Independency openly and he pushed for a policy of toleration for all who would join in the cause. Both Manchester and Cromwell attempted to build a godly army in the Eastern Association, and therefore encouraged soldiers to pray and preach, which alarmed Denzil Holles and his peace party.

The king's forces defeated Sir William Waller's South-Eastern Association forces at Cropredy Bridge, Oxon, on 29 June, and then the Earl of Essex at Lostwithiel, Cornwall, in July/August. Although the Scottish covenanting army had entered the war for 6 months, the war situation still ran against Parliament.

On 2 July, Cromwell's Ironsides won a great victory over Prince Rupert and his men at Marston Moor. This victory represented a turning point in the Civil War in four ways: 1) York surrendered shortly afterwards; 2) the need for the Scottish army was diminished; 3) Cromwell came to fame overnight; and 4) from now on, time was on the side of the Independents.

In September, St John, Vane and his war party became more openly committed to toleration of the sects as a whole for the purpose of gaining the support of the sectarian army. The impetus clearly came from Cromwell who appeared at Westminster in the same month.

By the end of 1644, the Scottish influence was already on the wane. This forced the Scots to break away from those who controlled the committee of both kingdoms, notably Vane, St John, and Cromwell, and ally with the peace party on 27 February 1644/5. As a result, the preeminence of the middle party in politics gave way to two new

alliances -- that of the Scots with the peace party, and that of the middle party with the war party. These new alliances were named "Presbyterian" and "Independent". Many of the "political Presbyterians" were anti-clerical Erastians who, in the lay tradition of the English Reformation, believed in the church dominated by Parliament, rather than controlled by a national synod. After the alliance with the Scots, they felt that a pseudo-Presbyterian Settlement might "please" the Scots. Hence they tried to bring about what the Scots called a "lame Erastian presbytery". The "political Independents", on the other hand, considering their own limited numbers in Parliament, either gave active support, or at least did not offer substantial opposition, to the legislation passed in 1645 and 1646 for the setting up of a Presbyterian organisation, provided it was a more loosely-structured one, which would allow a considerable measure of liberty of conscience. Some political Independents like Vane and Lord Saye remained in solidarity with the dissenting brethren debating in the Assembly.

Meanwhile, in the Spring of 1645, something happened, which eventually frustrated the effective establishment of the Scottish theocracy in England. This arose from the quarrel between Cromwell and Manchester that broke out in November 1644. Actually, since Essex's defeat at Lostwithiel in August, the political Independents in the Commons had tried to win the high command of the parliamentary forces away from the political Presbyterians in the Lords. (In that campaign, the work of the Congregationals in the Assembly played an important part.) Having resented Manchester's inept generalship at Newbury in November, which eventually enabled the king to enter Oxford "in triumph" in November, Cromwell accused Manchester, a politically conservative, in the Lower House of having remarked that "if we beate the King 99 times he would be King still... but if he beate us but once we should be hang'd." In order to defeat Charles and save the nation, Cromwell suggested that the army be reorganised and that those MPs who were commanders in the army hand in resignations "for the public good". As a result of Cromwell's impeachment of Manchester, both Vane and St John engineered the "New Model Ordinance" and the "Self-Denying Ordinance", which passed Parliament respectively in February and April 1645. The former created the New Model army; while the latter caused Cromwell, Sir Waller and Earls of Manchester and Essex to resign their commands. Now the political Independents gained the army; although they lost control of Parliament, which was now in the hands of the political Presbyterians. And the clerical Independents, such as the dissenting brethren, began to pin their hopes on the army, which was rising from strength to strength, with Sir Thomas Fairfax as its Lord General or commander-in-chief, who later appointed Cromwell through the Commons Lieutenant-General of the cavalry or second-in-command on 11 June, when a decisive battle approached.

On 14 June, the New Model army won a decisive victory over the Cavaliers at Naseby. On this battle R.S. Paul comments: "If Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 was a sign of the king's ultimate defeat, the battle of Naseby on 14 June 1645 was its seal." After the great victory, Cromwell wrote to the Commons and called once again for religious toleration. By now the question of toleration had become more and more important, for there had seemed little prospect of the accommodation of the Congregationals within the Presbyterian Establishment.

With the successes of the New Model army in the West, beginning with the victory at Langport on 10 July 1645 and the fall of Bristol on 10 September and culminating in the capitulation of Exeter on 9 April 1646, the royal power crumbled spectacularly in what had, since 1643, been the most powerfully royalist region in England. In despair, Charles chose to surrender himself to the Scots in May 1646. On 24 June, the first Civil War ended with the surrender of the royalist headquarters at Oxford.

In early 1647, Holles and his Melvillian MPs, fearful of the effects of the wider toleration, attempted to disband the army. With increasing disagreement between Parliament and army, Cromwell's army marched towards London. They eventually occupied Westminster and escorted Independent MPs, who had fled to the army, and most of whom were future Rumpers, to Whitehall on 6 August. Now the Independents became leaders of the House. On 13 October, the Rump Parliament inserted the toleration clause in the legislation setting up the Presbyterian government. Thus the medieval view of the one worshipping community of the Christian state was broken in the interests of toleration.

With the Scottish army's entry into England in May 1648, Cromwell marched northbound against the army. After defeating it at Preston in August, Cromwell returned to London and determined to put an end to the second Civil War by putting to death Charles upon whose most solemn treaties no reliance could be placed.

On 2 December 1648, the army occupied Westminster once again. Four days later, Colonel Pride "purged" Parliament by excluding some 110 MPs from the House. It was by force that Independents re-controlled Parliament and the City.

After that, there was a heated debate at Whitehall on the settlement of the church for the new regime. The radical Independents, notably Levellers, wanted church and state to be completely separated; while the conservative Independents, under Ireton and Nye, wanted church and state to be connected, though they certainly did not want people to be persecuted for conscience sake.

II. The Subsequent History of the Westminster Assembly (1644-1648)

In order to enable the reader to understand the whole debates between Congregationals and Presbyterians over church polity, it is equally necessary to give a brief outline of the subsequent history of the Westminster Assembly (1644-1648). This account is largely based on The Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines, in The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, ed. J.R. Pitman, XIII (1824); The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. David Laing (1841); George Gillespie, Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, ed. David Meek (1846); J.R. De Witt, Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government (1969); R.S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate" (1985).

In early January 1643/4, the chaotic situation of the Church forced the Assembly to discuss the burning issue of ordination. But, nevertheless, it grew apparent by late January that the issue of ordination could not be resolved without the prior issue of presbytery being debated and settled first. Hence the three propositions: 1)

there was to be by divine right a presbytery in every church; 2) it would consist of ministers; and 3) "there may be many congregations under one presbytery, as in the church at Jerusalem." While not objecting to the first two propositions, the Congregationals were provoked by the 3rd one, which was one of the main planks of the Presbyterian platform.

The discussion of the 3rd proposition commenced on 5 February, which brought Congregationals and Presbyterians into collision. Now the struggle was no longer between jure divino presbytery or Independency and jure divino episcopacy as it had been between 1640 and 1643, but between jure divino Independency and jure divino presbytery. The Congregational opposition was intense, for the pressure to adopt a classical presbytery was definitely a yielding to the Scottish commissioners' proposal for a four-tiered government. Thomas Goodwin began by arguing that "many congregations under one presbytery" was "inconsistent with the scripture". His argument was rebutted successively by Richard Vines, Stephen Marshall, and George Gillespie.

On the 8th, Jeremiah Burroughes argued that in 1 Cor 5:4 church censure is said to occur in the presence of the church -- "when ye are together". Lazarus Seaman responded by pointing out that in baptism a believer is made a member of the universal church. Must the universal church then be convened, he asked, because his membership concerns them all?

At the next session, Philip Nye confessed how close the two groups were to each other, affirming that the Congregationals "held classical and synodical meetings very useful and profitable.... But the quaere is this, Whether these meetings have the same power that ecclesia prima has?"

On the 13th, Goodwin carried the argument from 1 Cor 5 a step further, declaring that the power of excommunication belonged to the elders of Corinth meeting together with the church. Moreover, Goodwin made it clear that "they differ so far from Brownists, that they hold the people, without the officers, cannot excommunicate." But Marshall asked: "if the elders were out-voted, the excommunication should be stopped; and where then is the elder's power?" Here the difference between them is clearly seen: the Presbyterians believed that disciplinary power was vested in the presbytery, whereas the Congregationals were convinced that that power resided ultimately in the local brotherhood and eldership.

This was made more evident by the debate on the nature of ecclesia (Mt 18:17), the seat of the ecclesial power. William Bridge argued that the "church" could refer neither to a civil court, a bishop, nor to a presbytery, but to a particular congregation consisting of both elders and brethren, which only had full power of jurisdiction.

On the 20th, John Selden argued that the "church" meant the "Sanhedrim" (a civil court). The day following, Gillespie responded to the great Erastian humanist by pointing out the spiritual nature of the text. The Assembly thus anticipated its ultimate struggle with Parliament in 1645-46.

The chasm grew wider on the 21st when MPs came to listen to the debates and Nye openly attacked Presbyterian government. His speech created a great sensation. Alexander Henderson was provoked to declare that Nye "spoke against... all the Reformed churches". But Lord Saye

seemed to defend the Congregationals. It was finally voted that the arguments from Mt 18:17 brought in against the 3rd proposition were not proved.

On 8 March, to prevent an open breach, the Assembly set up a committee for accommodation, which consisted of four Presbyterians and four Congregationals. A week later, the Congregationals conceded that there might be a "presbytery" or "meeting of elders... assembled from several churches". But, it must be pointed out, this presbytery could only "withdraw from" or "deny church-communion and fellowship with" the church offending.

The debate that raged for six weeks, from 5 February to 21 March, by no means finally settled the issues at stake. But it did embryonically indicate what was to come: the debates on presbytery, synod, the subjects of church power, ecclesiastical censures, excommunication, the rights of congregations, and related matters.

It was not until 18 March that the discussion of ordination started again. By 3 April, the doctrinal part of ordination had been finished. A week later, when the divines were urged to forward to Parliament the 3rd proposition, "many congregations may be under one presbytery", the Congregationals were in a panic and threatened to submit their reasons of dissent if this were done. Thus a committee for accommodation was set up again, and afterwards suggested that the 3rd proposition be omitted for the time being.

On 25 April, the discussion on presbytery was resumed. From now on, the Presbyterians little by little sketched out their Presbyterian system. During the month of May, it was successively voted: 1) that where Christians multiplied to a greater number than could ordinarily meet together for the worship of God, it was expedient that they be divided into distinct and fixed congregations; 2) that "in every congregation there ought to be one at least to labour in the word and doctrine and to rule.... that there be others to assist him in ruling, and some to take care for the poor;" and 3) that "no single congregation... may assume to itself all and sole power in ordination."

In June, the divines changed the topic into the less contentious Directory for the Public Worship, leaving the issue of presbytery in abeyance until September.

By the summer of 1644, with the questions of ordination and presbytery remaining unsettled, the Congregationals had used every possible tactic to prolong debates, trying to delay the establishment of presbyteries and allow time for their colleagues in Parliament to demand toleration from the Houses, and for the strength of Cromwell and his army to grow enough to diminish the influence of the clerical Presbyterians in the Assembly. Their delaying tactics caused the number of sects and heresies, especially in the army, to increase, which made the Presbyterians more intransigent over religious uniformity, and ultimately caused the newly-born presbyteries to fall victims to the rising power of the army that was sympathetic to toleration, and hence benefited the Congregational cause.

The period between the battles of Marston Moor and Naseby was a crucial transition in Presbyterian-Congregational relations. For in this period, the break between them on church government became final.

In late August, the Assembly began to draw up the Directory for the Public Worship (finally published in January 1644/5) and the Confession of Faith.

On 6 September, the Assembly resumed its discussion on church government. On the 17th, it was resolved that Acts 15 proved that the synod was "made up of pastors and teachers". Nye added two days later that brethren were also "members of synods". The Scots were very much opposed to admitting brethren to synods. A compromise was, however, reached the following day: brethren might be members of synods when it was deemed expedient. On the 23rd, the Assembly took up the question of a subordination of assemblies, which directly involved the seat of church power. Plainly enough, it was far more troublesome an issue.

Meanwhile, the army tried to do something in the interests of the Congregationals. Thus Cromwell who appeared at Westminster urged the Commons to pass the order that either accommodation or toleration be considered. Afterwards, a sub-committee of agreements was formed. Although meetings were held on the 20th and again on 11 and 15 October, the propositions formulated did not help bring the parties closer together.

The debates on church government continued throughout the next few months. On 2 October, it was determined that Mt 18:15-7, showing the subordination of an offender to a particular church, did "prove a subordination of a congregation to superior assemblies". On the 8th, it was passed that "all these [superior] assemblies have some power of censure," notwithstanding the Congregationals' denial of any such power to a classical presbytery, and their restriction of any exercise of discipline beyond that of a congregation to a sentence of non-communion or withdrawal.

On 8 November, the Assembly presented to Parliament what had been hitherto voted as the advice of the divines for the Houses concerning church government, including the 3rd proposition that "many congregations may be under one presbytery". A week later, the seven dissenters (Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Burroughes, Bridge, Carter, and Greenhill) brought in their reasons of dissent, which were soon considered by a chosen committee. Finally, on 11 December, the Assembly for the second time presented to Parliament its draft of all the votes in regard to church government under the title: "The humble advice of the Assembly of Divines now sitting at Westminster concerning Church government". The following day, the Congregationals entered their dissent from three propositions: "that in Ephesus there was a classical presbytery; that there is a subordination of Assemblies; that a single congregation has not all and sole power of ordination." The same committee was assigned the task of preparing answers to these. Thus the Assembly work became preoccupied with the Reasons and the Answers.

By the close of 1644, the issues of church officers, presbyteries, and synods had been deliberated, the major lines of difference between Presbyterians and Congregationals had been drawn, the accommodation of the Congregationals within the national church had failed, and toleration, rather than accommodation, had now become Congregationals' objective. (It must be noted, however, that the unfruitful accommodation efforts lasted until the end of 1645.)

Having completed its "Propositions concerning Church Government" on 8 November and on 11 December respectively, the Assembly turned to the preparation of a practical directory for excommunication. In January 1644/5, the subject of excommunication was debated. On 3 February, when the divines were to submit the Directory for Excommunication to Parliament, the Congregationals entered their dissent from what was supposed to have been an accommodation of all the parties concerned. After that, a committee was appointed to answer

the Congregationals. Hence the papers of both parties, largely a rehearsal of arguments used again and again throughout the course of the previous year, published on 5 February, under the title: The Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren against the Third Proposition, concerning Presbyterial Government, and The Answer of the Assembly of Divines unto the Reasons.

On 10 February 1644/5, Dr Edmund Stanton brought in a proposition that "appeals may be made from the inferiour to the superiour respectively." The next day, Bridge introduced a counter-proposition that "there can be no appeal to another Court." A week later, the Assembly entered upon a debate over the powers proper to synods, particularly their excommunicatory powers. The debate lasted until 17 March, when Stanton's proposition was voted affirmatively. Afterwards, the powers of the classical presbytery were also debated.

Having discussed excommunication in relation to synods and classes, the Assembly turned to the more difficult point of the powers of particular congregations on 21 March, when it was resolved that the dissenting brethren bring in what they thought fit for the particular congregation. On the 27th, Nye presented a paper containing these propositions: "1. That there is a platform of Church-Government for the Church, laid down in Scripture. 2. That this is immutable, and binding the conscience to the observation thereof. 3. That... Pastors, Teachers, Ruling Elders, and Deacons, are of divine Institution. 4. That the people have an Interest in the choice of those Officers." After that, the dissenting brethren were asked to bring in a platform of church government with their grounds and reasons.

Under the pressure of the Assembly, the Congregationals withdrew from the Assembly to draft such a platform and left the Presbyterian majority to proceed uninterruptedly with their own schemes between 1 April and December 1645. During this period, Thomas Goodwin was said to be in the country working on it. The report was postponed from time to time until the victory of the New Model army at Naseby in June changed the political climate and permitted the Congregationals eventually to abandon the project. Goodwin's remarkable defence of the gathered church remained in manuscript until it was published in his collected works by his son at the end of the century.

It was in the spring of 1645 that the real clash between the divine right of presbytery and the claims of Parliament commenced. While the Presbyterian majority insisted that church officers should have discretionary powers of suspending from the sacrament those who had "scandalous sins", Parliament claimed that the civil magistrate was the final court of appeal for such cases.

After Baillie returned from Edinburgh, he was delighted with the progress that the Assembly had made in the absence of the dissenting brethren. He wrote on 25 April: "The Independents, these six weeks, have not much troubled the Assemblie... it was found meet to put them to declare their mind positive[ly].... we expect daily when they shall present to us their platforme of Church Government." As time went on, however, Baillie began to feel uneasy about the silence of the Congregationals. On 4 May, he wrote: "Every day this moneth we have been expecting their positive tenets, but as yet we heard nothing of them."

The Assembly finalised its recommendations on church government in April. However, it must be noted that Presbyterian votes in the Assembly had always been balanced by Independent successes since the battle of Marston Moor.

On 7 July, "A Directory for Church Government and Ordination of Ministers" had finally been put in the hands of the Houses. The month was largely spent in laying the groundwork for the Confession of Faith.

The dissenting brethren were absent; now the remaining obstacles, for Baillie, were the sectaries in the army and Erastians in Parliament.

The year between August 1645 and August 1646 was the year of Erastian challenge and response. During this year, most of the traditional areas of conflict between Presbyterians and Congregationals became submerged in the new issue.

In August, Parliament approved the legislation for the setting up of a presbytery in London, although it was not implemented until July 1646. The great topic in this month was again the question of church censures and the determination of the parliamentary Erastians to withhold such power from church officers.

On 13 October, the Congregationals submitted a lengthy explanation for their failure to bring into the Assembly their positive model of church government.

On 6 November, Parliament revived the committee for accommodation. On the 12th, the paper, submitted by the 7 dissenting brethren a month earlier, was published. It appeared under the title, A Copy of a Remonstrance Lately Delivered in to the Assembly... Declaring the Grounds and Reasons of their declining to bring into the Assembly their modell of Church-Government. To this the Presbyterians prepared an adequate reply, which was later published under the title, The Answer of the Assembly of Divines By Authority of Parliament Now sitting at Westminster. Unto the Reasons given in to this Assembly By The Dissenting Brethren, Of their not bringing in a Model of their Ways (26 February 1645/6). Meetings for accommodation were held in the space of the winter. But the time for accommodation seemed gone, for the Congregationals requested toleration instead of accommodation. On 4 December, they published their proposals to the committee: 1) that these congregations not be brought under the presbytery; 2) that they have the liberty to constitute their own elderships; and 3) that they not be forced to communicate as members in the parishes where they dwelt, but be free to gather churches of their own on a voluntary basis which possessed the power of all church censures and of administering all the ordinances. The Presbyterians, however, found it extremely difficult to allow the Congregationals to withdraw communion from the Establishment, as indicated in 3), since the Directory for the Public Worship and the Confession of Faith were to be imposed upon both conformists and dissenters, and such a toleration would countenance a perpetual schism in the church. But the Congregationals responded that they did not desire a total separation. They would practise the same worship and have the same discipline and officers. They would be accountable to the state and enjoy fellowship with the Presbyterians by an occasional exchange of preachers and sharing of the sacraments of both baptism and the Lord's Supper. They also argued that a schism consists "in an open breach of Christian love, and not in every diversity of opinion or practise". The upshot of the accommodation negotiations was the solidarity between the Assembly and army Independents in a demand for outright toleration.

At the beginning of January 1645/6, the rigid Presbyterian ministers meeting at Sion College presented a letter to the Assembly, denouncing toleration. Echoing this, the City Council sent up a

petition to Parliament in mid January, expressing dismay at the chaotic situation in London and desire for the immediate establishment of presbytery.

However, it was not until 5 June 1646 that Parliament passed an ordinance that required the immediate erection of presbyteries and synods; although this was too late, very much too late. In November, classes began to meet in London. In May 1647, the first provincial synod met at St Paul's. (Afterwards it met at Sion College until August 1660.) But, three months later, the army's first occupation of London actually made it utterly impossible for Parliament to enforce the scheme nationwide. By 1649 provincial synods and fairly complete classes had functioned only in London, Lancashire, and Essex!

Admittedly, the delay in establishing Presbyterian government was not only caused by the Congregationals' tactics, but also by the Erastians' clashes with Presbyterians over the jure divino right of church officers to govern the church and suspend sinners from the sacrament.

From the summer of 1646 onwards, the Assembly tried to get completed the Confession of Faith and the Catechism. The Confession in its final form with proof texts from Scripture was presented to Parliament on 29 April 1647. It was approved by Parliament in a somewhat shortened form on 20 June 1648. (Parliament omitted chapters 30 and 31 that asserted the jus divinum of the church.) The Catechism was completed on 4 January 1646/7, when a fresh idea occurred to the Parliament that the work should be separated into two Catechisms, the Larger and Shorter. Both of them with proof texts were sent up to Parliament on 14 April 1648. The latter was approved by Parliament on 22 September, while the former was approved by the Commons but never formally accepted by the Lords.

Baillie left the Assembly on 25 December 1646. Rutherford, the last of the Scottish commissioners to remain in London, left on 9 November 1647. By now the Scots had almost achieved fourfold covenanted uniformity: one confession of faith, one directory for worship, one catechism, and one form of government in both kingdoms. Their victory was indeed real, but hollow; for what they had achieved in England was but the Erastian version of Presbyterianism.

The period after 1646 was a time of acute frustration for Presbyterians and remarkable growth for Independents or Congregationals. Sectarianism, particularly in the army, spread with amazing rapidity, emerging as the spiritually and politically dominant force in England. On the contrary, the prestige of Presbyterianism was fatally undermined by the alliance between the king and the Scots that ushered in the second Civil War in May 1648. And the defeat of the Scots at Preston in August ensured that Presbyterianism would never be fully implemented.

The actual work of the Assembly concluded with the Catechisms in a final form on 14 April 1648. The demise of the Assembly, however, did not take place until 22 February 1648/9, two months and a half after Pride's Purge. It must be pointed out that the Assembly was never officially dissolved.

III. The Tract War (1644-1646)

The publication of the Apologeticall Narration immediately provoked a series of replies and counter-replies in their turn, in which each disputant was more eager to confute his antagonist than to promote

peace and harmony. This tract war displayed the two systems of church government for the first time to the reading public. Its vehemency gathering momentum outside the Assembly, it could be argued, greatly affected the growing rifts between Congregationals and Presbyterians inside the Assembly, and thus made accommodation more unlikely.

In direct or indirect response to the petition of the dissenting brethren, almost 30 tracts are shown to have been printed within the space of 2 years, either attacking or defending the dissenting brethren and the Scots. The following is the survey of the sudden outburst of Presbyterian/Congregational tracts consequent on the Apologeticall Narration:

[Alexander Henderson], Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, Cleared from some mistakes and prejudices: by the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Church of Scotland, now at London (24 January 1643/4).

[Roger Williams], Queries of Highest Consideration, Proposed to Mr. Tho. Goodwin, P. Nye, W. Bridges, J. Burroughs, S. Sympson, And to the Commissioners from the Generall Assembly (so called) of the Church of Scotland (9 February 1643/4).

[Adam Steuart], Some Observations & Annotations upon the Apologeticall Narration (29 February 1643/4).

[Nathaniel Homes], A Coole Conference between the Scottish Commissioners Cleared Reformation, and the Holland Ministers Apologeticall Narration (4 March 1643/4).

William Rathband, A Briefe Narration of Some Church Courses Held in Opinion and Practise in the Churches lately erected in New England (9 March 1643/4).

Adam Steuart, An Answer to a libell intituled "A coole conference betweene the cleered reformation and the apologeticall narration" (16 April 1644).

[John Goodwin], M.S. to A.S. with A Plea for Libertie of Conscience in a Church way, against the cavils of A.S. (3 May 1644), or A Reply of two of the Brethren to A.S. wherein you have Observations on his Considerations, Annotations, &c. upon the Apol. Narration ([2nd ed.] 11 July 1644).

[Henry Robinson], The Saints Apologie: or, A Vindication of the Churches which endeavour after a pure communion from the odious names of Brownists and Separatists (15 May 1644).

[Alexander Forbes], An Anatomy of Independency, or A Briefe Commentary, and Moderate Discourse upon The Apologeticall Narration (7 June 1644).

Sidrach Simpson, The Anatomist Anatomis'd, or, a Short Answer to some things in the Book, intituled, An Anatomy of Independencie (28 June 1644).

Thomas Edwards, Antapologia, or, A Full Answer to the Apologetical Narration (13 July 1644).

Thomas Welde, An Answer to W.R. His Narration of the Opinions and Practises of the Churches lately erected in Nevv-England (27 July 1644).

William Prynne, Twelve Considerable Serious Questions touching Chvrch Government (16 September 1644).

William Prynne, Independency Examined Vnmasked and Refuted (26 September 1644).

[John Goodwin], Certaine briefe Observations and Antiquaeries on Master Prins Twelve Questions (4 October 1644).

John Goodwin, Theomachia; or The Grand Imprudence of men running the hazard of Fighting Against God, in suppressing any Way, Doctrine, or practice, concerning which they know not certainly whether it be from God or no (7 October 1644).

William Prynne, A Full Reply to certaine briefe Observations and anti-Queries (19 October 1644).

Henry Burton, A Vindication of Churches commonly called Independents: or a Briefe Ansvver to two Books: the one intituled "Twelve considerable serious Questions", and other "Independency examined" (14 November 1644).

Adam Steuart, The Second Part of the Dvply to M.S. alias Two Brethren (4 December 1644).

William Prynne, Trvth Trivmphing over Falshood, Antiquity over Novelty (2 January 1644/5).

Guilielmus Appollonius, A Consideration of Certaine Controversies at this time agitated in the Kingdome of England, concerning the Government of the Church of God (9 April 1645).

William Prynne, A Fresh Discovery of some Prodigious New Wandering-Blasing Stars & Firebrands, stiling themselves New Lights, Firing our Church and State into New Combustions (24 July 1645).

John Bastwick, Independency not Gods Ordinance; or a Treatise concerning Church Government, occasioned by the Distractions of these times (1645).

Robert Baillie, A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time: wherein the Tenets of the principall Sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together in one Map (19 November 1645).

Thomas Edwards, Gangraena: Or Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time (February 1646).

Thomas Edwards, The Second Part of Gangraena: or a fresh and further Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and dangerous Proceedings of the Sectaries of this time (May 1646).

Jeremiah Burroughes, A Vindication of Mr Bvrrovghes, against Mr Edwards his foule Aspersions, in his spreading Gangraena, and his angry Antapologia (1646).

John Goodwin, An Apologesiates Antapologias. Or, The inexcusablenesse of that Grand Accusation of the Brethren, called Antapologia (17 July 1646).

Thomas Edwards, The Third Part of Gangraena: or A new and higher Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and insolent Proceedings of the Sectaries of these time (December 1646).

The tract controversies of 1644-1646 were concerned mainly with 1) the Scriptural merits of Presbytery or Independency; 2) the questions of a national church; 3) the role of the civil magistrate in church affairs; and 4) toleration.

IV. "The Principles of Faith" (1654)

As early as January 1651/2, the Socinian catechism, recently published in England, had posed a much greater threat to Protestant orthodoxy than the heresies of Arminianism, Anabaptism, and Antinomianism. In response, Owen, Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, and other divines had presented to the Rump Parliament in December the Humble Proposals, to which were appended 16 fundamentals of faith. The Proposals sought to provide "all parishes in England with able, godly and orthodox ministers", to settle "right constituted churches", and to prevent "persons of corrupt judgements, from publishing dangerous errours and blasphemies in assemblies and meetings".

In September 1654, the first Protectorate Parliament met and tried to interpret all who "profess faith in God by Jesus Christ", whom the Instrument of Government (16 December 1653) had proposed to tolerate, to mean all Christians who held the "fundamentals". Thus the Parliament nominated a committee of 14 divines (including Owen, Goodwin, Nye, and Simpson) to draw up the "fundamentals of religion", which were to be the basis of the Cromwellian Settlement under the terms of the Instrument, and to define the limits of the toleration as guaranteed in the aforesaid constitution. Soon afterwards, the committee published a list of 16 "principles of faith", which were obviously based on the 16 fundamentals of faith as defined in late 1652. None the less, the document was shelved on the dissolution of the Parliament on 22 January 1654/5.

This document extended toleration or indulgence only to those who professed "the fundamentals of the Christian faith". It excluded Socinians by declaring that "Jesus Christ is the true God", Quakers by asserting that "Scripture is that rule of knowing God", and Romanists by affirming that "we are justified and saved by grace, and faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works." The 16 "principles of faith", however, upset Richard Baxter, who actually wanted the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue to be the basis of the "fundamentals". (See Reliquiae Baxterianae, 198.)

In order to enable the reader to understand the dissenting brethren's concept of the fundamentals of Christianity more fully, it is worth quoting here "the principles of faith" in full. The full text of "the principles of faith" by Goodwin, Nye and Simpson reads as follows:

1. That the holy Scripture is that rule of knowing God, and living unto him, which whoso doth not believe, but betakes himself to any other way of discovering truth, and the mind of God, in stead thereof, cannot be saved.

2. That there is a God, who is the Creator, Governor and Judge of the world, which is to be received by faith, and every other way of the knowledge of him is insufficient, Heb. 11.3.

3. That this God who is the Creator, is eternally distinct from all the creatures, in his being and blessedness.

4. That this God is one in three persons or subsistences.

5. That Jesus Christ is the onely Mediator between God and men, without the knowledg of whom there is no salvation.

6. That this Jesus Christ is the true God.

7. That this Jesus Christ is also true man.

8. That this Jesus Christ is God and man in one person.

9. That this Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, who by paying a ransom, and bearing our sins, hath made satisfaction for them.

10. That this same Lord Jesus Christ is he that was crucified at Jerusalem, and rose again, and ascended into heaven.

11. That this same Jesus Christ being the onely God and man in one person, remains for ever a distinct Person from all Saints and Angels, notwithstanding their union and communion with him.

12. That all men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins; and no man can be saved, unless he be born again, repent and believe.

13. That we are justified and saved by grace, and faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works.

14. That to continue in any known sin, upon what pretence or principle soever, is damnable.

15. That God is to be worshipped according to his own will; and whosoever shall forsake and despise all the duties of his worship cannot be saved.

16. That the dead shall rise, and that there is a day of Judgment, wherein all shall appear, some to go into everlasting life and some into everlasting condemnation.

The full text is to be found in Ralph Farmer, The Great Mysteries of Godlinesse and Ungodlinesse. The one opened from that eternall truth of the un-erring Scripture of the ever-blessed JESUS. The other discovered from the writings and speaking of a generation of deceivers, called QUAKERS (January 1654/5), 66f.

V. The Full Text of the Apologeticall Narration

The Apologeticall Narration was reproduced successively in William Haller (ed.), Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647, II (Iowa, 1934), 306-339, and R.S. Paul, An Apologeticall Narration (1644) (Philadelphia, Boston, 1963), 1-31.

[frontispiece] THis Apologeticall Narration of our Reverend and deare Brethren the learned Authors of it, 'tis so full of peaceablenesse, modesty, and candour; and withall, at this time so seasonably needfull, as well towards the vindication of the Protestant party in generall, from the aspersions of Incommunicablenesse within it selfe, and Incompatiblenesse with Magistracy; as of themselves in particular, both against misreportings from without, & some possible mistakings from within too: That however for mine own part I have appeared on, and doe still encline to the Presbyteriall way of Church Government, yet doe I think it every way fit for the Presse.

Charles Herle

[title page] AN/ Apologeticall Narration,/ HVMBLY SVBMITTED/ TO THE/ HONOURABLE HOUSES/ OF/ PARLIAMENT./ BY/ Tho: Goodwin,/ Philip Nye,/ Sidrach Simpson,/ Jer: Burroughes,/ William Bridge./ LONDON,/ Printed for ROBERT DAWLMAN,/ M.DC.XLIII.

[p.1] AN/ APOLOGETICALL NARRATION/ OF SOME/ MINISTERS,/ Formerly in Exile:/ NOW/ Members of the Assembly of Divines.

OUR eares have been of late so filled with a sudden and unexpected noyse of confused exclamations, (though not so expresly directed against us in particular, yet in the interpretation of the most, refleting on us) that awakened thereby, we are enforced to anticipate a little that discovery of our selves which otherwise we resolved to have left to Time and Experience of our wayes and spirits, the truest Discoverers and surest Judges of all men and their actions.

And now we shall begin to make some appearance into publique light, unto whose view and judgements should we (that have hitherto laine under so dark a cloud of manifold mis-apprehensions) at first present our selves, but the Supreame Judicatory of this Kingdome, which is and hath been in all times the most just severe Tribunall **[p.2]** for guiltinesse to appeare before, much more to dare to appeale unto; and yet withall the most sacred refuge and Asylum for mistaken and mis-judged innocence?

The most, if not all of us, had ten years since (some more, some lesse) severall setled Stations in the Ministery, in places of publique use in the Church, not unknown to many of your selves; but the sinful evill of those corruptions in the publique worship and government of this Church, which all doe now so generally acknowledge and decrie, took hold upon our consciences long before some others of our brethren; And then how impossible it was to continue in those times our service and standings, all mens apprehensions will readily acquit us.

Neither at the first did we see or look further then the dark part, the evill of those superstitions adjoyned to the worship of God, which have been the common stumbling block and offence of many thousand tender consciences, both in our own and our neighbour Churches, ever since the first Reformation of Religion: which yet was enough to

deprive us of the publique exercise of our Ministeries, and together therewith (as the watchfulnesse of those times grow) of our personall participation in some ordinances; and further exposed us either to personall violence and persecution, or an exile to avoid it: Which latter we did the rather choose, that so the use and exercise of our Ministeries (for which we were borne and live) might not be wholly lost, nor our selves remain [p.3] debarred from the enjoyment of the Ordinances of Christ, which we account our birth-right, and best portion in this life.

This being our condition, wee were cast upon a further necessity of enquiring into and viewing the light part, the positive part of Church-worship and Government; And to that end to search out what were the first Apostolique directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament, as that sacred pillar of fire to guide us. And in this enquirie, we lookt upon the word of Christ as impartially, and unprejudicely, as men made of flesh and blood are like to doe in any juncture of time that may fall out; the places we went to, the condition we were in, the company we went forth with, affording no temptation to byas us any way, but leaving us as freely to be guided by that light and touch Gods Spirit should by the Word vouchsafe our consciences, as the Needle toucht with the Load-stone is in the Compasse. And we had (of all men) the greatest reason to be true to our own consciences in what we should embrace, seeing it was for our consciences that we were deprived at once of what ever was dear to us. We had no new Common-wealths to rear, to frame Church-government unto, whereof any one piece might stand in the others light, to cause the least variation by us from the Primitive pattern; We had no State-ends or Politicall interests to comply with; No Kingdoms in our eye to subdue unto our mould; (which yet will be coexistent with the peace of any form of Civil Govern- [p.4] ment on earth) No preferment or worldly respects to shape our opinions for: We had nothing else to doe but simply and singly to consider how to worship God acceptably, and so most according to his word.

Wee were not engaged by Education or otherwise to any other of the Reformed Churches; And although we consulted with reverence what they hold forth both in their writings and practice, yet we could not but suppose that they might not see into all things about worship and government, their intentions being most spent (as also of our first Reformers in England) upon the Reformation in Doctrine, in which they had a most happy hand: And we had with many others observed, that although the exercise of that Government had been accompanied with more peace, yet the Practicall part, the power of godlinesse and the profession thereof, with difference from carnall and formall Christians, had not been advanced and held forth among them, as in this our owne Island, as themselves have generally acknowledged. We had the advantage of all that light which the conflicts of our owne Divines (the good old Non-conformists) had struck forth in their times; And the draughts of Discipline which they had drawn; which we found not in all things the very same with the practises of the Reformed Churches; And what they had written came much more commended to us, not onely because they were our own, but because sealed with their manifold and bitter sufferings. We had likewise the fatall miscarriages and ship- [p.5] wracks of the Separation (whom ye call Brownists) as Land-marks to fore-warn us of those rocks and shelves they ran upon; which also did put us upon an enquiry into the principles that might be the causes of their divisions. Last of all, we had the recent and later example of the wayes and practices (and

those improved to a better Edition and greater refinement, by all the fore-mentioned helps) of those multitudes of godly men of our own Nation, almost to the number of another Nation, and among them some as holy and judicious Divines as this Kingdome hath bred; whose sincerity in their way hath been testified before all the world, and wil be unto all generations to come, by the greatest undertaking (but that of our father Abraham out of his own countrey, and his seed after him) a transplanting themselves many thousand miles distance, and that by sea, into a Wildernes, meerly to worship God more purely, whither to allure them there could be no other invitement. And yet we still stood as unengaged spectators, free to examine and consider what truth is to be found in and amongst all there, (all which we look upon as Reformed Churches) and this nakedly according to the word; We resolved not to take up our Religion by or from any partie, and yet to approve and hold fast whatsoever is good in any, though never so much differing from us, yea opposite unto us.

And for our own congregations, we meane of England (in which thorough the grace of Christ we were converted, and exercised our Ministeries [p.6] long, to the conversion of many others) We have this sincere profession to make before God and all the world, that all that conscience of the defilements we conceived to cleave to the true worship of God in them, or of the unwarranted power in Church Governours exercised therein, did never work in any of us any other thought, much lesse opinion, but that multitudes of the assemblies and parochiall congregations thereof, were the true Churches and Body of Christ, and the Ministery thereof a true Ministery: Much lesse did it ever enter into our hearts to judge them Antichristian; we saw and cannot but see that by the same reason the Churches abroad in Scotland, Holland, &c. (though more reformed) yet for their mixture must be in like manner judged no Churches also, which to imagine or conceive, is and hath ever been an horrour to our thoughts. Yea we alwayes have professed, & that in these times when the Churches of England were the most, either actually overspread with defilement, or in the greatest danger thereof, and when our selves had least, yea no hopes of ever so much as visiting our own land again in peace and safety to our persons; that we both did and would hold a communion with them as the Churches of Christ. And besides this profession, as a reall testimony thereof, some of us after we, actually, were in this way of communion, baptized our children in Parishionall congregations, and (as we had occasion) did offer to receive into the communion of the Lords Supper with us, some (whom we knew godly that come to visit us when we were [p.7] in our exile) upon that relation, fellowship, and commembership they held in their parish Churches in England, they professing themselves to be members thereof, and belonging thereunto. What we have since our returne publiquely and avowedly made declaration of to this purpose, many hundreds can witnesse, and some of our brethren in their printed bookes candidly do testify for us. **[in the right margin:** Mr. Cheynett <this is a misprint for Cheynell>. Rise & growth of Socinianisme.]

And as we alwayes held this respect unto our own Churches in this Kingdome, so we received and were entertained with the like from those reformed Churches abroad, among whom we were cast to live, we both mutually gave and received the right hand of fellowship, which they on their parts abundantly manifested by the very same characters and testimonies of difference which are proper to their own Orthodoxe Churches, and whereby they use to distinguish them from all those sects (which they tollerate, but not own) and all the assemblies of

them (which yet now we are here some would needs ranke us with) granting to some of us their own Churches, or publique places for worship, to assemble in, where themselves met for the worship of God at differing houres the same day: As likewise the priviledge of ringing a publique Bell to call unto our meetings: which we mention because it is amongst them made the great signall of difference between their own allowed Churches and all other assemblies, unto whom it is strictly prohibited and forbidden, as Guiciardine hath long since observed: And others of us found such acceptance with them, that in testimony there- [p.8] of they allowed a full and liberall maintenance annually for our Ministers, yea and constantly also Wine for our Communions. And then we again on our parts, not onely held all brotherly correspondency with their Divines, but received also some of the members of their Churches (who desired to communicate with us) unto communion in the Sacraments and other ordinances, by virtue of their relation of membership retained in those Churches.

Now for the way & practices of our Churches, we give this briefe and generall account. Our publique worship was made up of no other parts then the worship of all other reformed Churches doth consist of. As, publique and solemne prayers for Kings and all in authority, &c. the reading the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; Exposition of them as occasion was; and constant preaching of the word; the administration of the two Sacraments, Baptisme to infants, and the Lords Supper; singing of Psalmes; collections for the poor, &c. every Lords day. For officers and publique Rulers in the Church, we set up no other but the very same which the reformed Churches judge necessary and sufficient, and as instituted by Christ and his Apostles for the perpetuall government of his Church, that is, Pastors, Teachers, Ruling Elders, (with us not lay but Ecclesiastique persons separated to that service) and Deacons. And for the matter of government and censures of the Church, we had not executed any other but what all ac- [p.9] knowledge, namely, Admonition, and Excommunication upon obstinacie and impenitencie, (which we blesse God we never exercised.) This latter we judged should be put in execution, for no other kind of sins then may evidently be presumed to be perpetrated against the parties known light; as whether it be a sin in manners and conversation, such as is committed against the light of nature, or the common received practices of Christianity, professed in all the Churches of Christ; or if in opinions, then such, as are likewise contrary to the received principles of Christianity, and the power of godlinesse, professed by the party himselfe, and universally acknowledged in all the rest of the churches, and no other sins to be the subject of that dreadful sentence.

And for our directions in these or what ever else requisite to the manage of them, we had these three Principles more especially in our eye, to guide and steere our practice by.

First, the supreame rule without us, was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles. Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures, that there is therein a compleat sufficiencie, as to make the man of God perfect, so also to make the Churches of God perfect, (meere circumstances we except, or what rules the law of nature doth in common dictate) if the directions and examples therein delivered were fully known and followed. And although we cannot professe that sufficiency of knowledge as to be [p.10] able to lay forth all those rules therein which may meet with all cases and emergencies that may or sometimes did fal out amongst us, or that may give satisfaction

unto all Queres possible to be put unto us; yet we found principles enough, not onely fundamentall and essential to the being of a Church, but superstructory also for the wel-being of it, and those to us cleare and certaine, and such as might well serve to preserve our Churches in peace and from offence, and would comfortably guide us to heaven in safe way: And the observation of so many of those particulars to be laid forth in the Word, became to us a more certaine evidence and cleare confirmation that there were the like rules and rules cases for all occasions whatsoever, if we were able to discern them. And for all such cases wherein we saw not a cleare resolution from Scripture, example, or direction, wee stil professedly suspended, untill God should give us further light, not daring to eeke out what was defective in our light in matters Divine with humane prudence, (the fatall errour to Reformation) lest by sowing any piece of the old garment unto the new, we should make the rent worse; we having this promise of grace for our encouragement in this, which in our publique Assemblies was often for our comfort mentioned, that in thus doing the will of God we should know more.

A second Principle we carryed along with us in all our resolutions, was, Not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law unto our selves for the future, which we in like manner made [p.11] continuall profession of upon all occasions. We had too great an instance of our own frailty in the former way of our conformity; and therefore in a jealousie of our selves, we kept this reserve, (which we made open and constant professions of) to alter and retract (though not lightly) what ever should be discovered to be taken up out of a mis-understanding of the rule: Which principle wee wish were (next to that most supreame, namely, to be in all things guided by the perfect wil of God) enacted as the most sacred law of all other, in the midst of all other Laws and Canons Ecclesiastical in Christian States and Churches throughout the world.

Thirdly, we are able to hold forth this true and just Apologie unto the world, That in the matters of greatest moment and controversie, we stil chose to practice safely, and so, as we had reason to judge that al sorts, or the most of all the Churches did acknowledge warrantable, although they make additaments thereunto.

For instance: Whereas one great controversie of these times is about the qualification of the Members of the Churches, and the promiscuous receiving and mixture of good and bad; Therein we chose the better part, and to be sure, received in none but such as all the Churches in the world would by the balance of the Sanctuary acknowledge faithful. And yet in this we are able to make this true and just profession also, That the Rules which we gave up our judgements unto, to judge those vve received in amongst us by, vvere of that [p.12] latitude as would take in any member of Christ, the meanest, in whom there may be supposed to be the least of Christ, and indeed such and no other as all the godly in this Kingdome carry in their bosomes to judge others by. We took measure of no mans holinesse by his opinion, whether concurring with us, or adverse unto us; And Churches made up of such, we were sure no Protestant could but approve of, (as touching the members of it) to be a true Church, with which communion might be held. Againe, concerning the great ordinance of Publique Prayer and the Lyturgie of the Church, whereas there is this great controversie upon it about the lawfulnesse of set formes prescribed; we practiced (without condemning others) what all sides doe allow, and themselves doe practice also, that the publique Prayers in our Assemblies should be framed by the meditations and study of our

own Ministers, out of their own gifts, (the fruits of Christs Ascension) as well as their Sermons use to be. This vve vvere sure all allowed of, though they superadded the other. So likewise for the government and discipline in the Churches, however the practice of the Reformed Churches is in greater matters to govern each particular congregation by a combined Presbyterie of the Elders of several congregations united in one for government; yet so, as in their judgements they allow, especially in some cases, a particular congregation, an entire and compleat power of jurisdiction to be exercised by the Elders thereof within it selfe; Yea and our own Master Cartwright, holy Baynes, and other old [p.13] Non-conformists, place the power of Excommunication in the Eldership of each particular Church with the consent of the Church, untill they do mis-carry, and then indeed they subject them to such Presbyterial and Provincial Assemblies as the proper refuge for appeales and for compounding of differences amongst Churches; which combination of Churches others of them therefore call Ecclesiae ortae, but particular congregations Ecclesia primae, as wherein firstly the power and priviledg of a Church is to be exercised. And vvithall vve could not but imagine, that the first Churches planted by the Apostles, were ordinarily of no more in one city at first then might make up one entire congregation, ruled by their own Elders, that also preached to them; for that in every city where they came, the number of converts did or should arise to such a multitude as to make several and sundry congregations, or that the Apostles should stay the setting up of any Churches at all, until they rose to such a numerous multiplication as might make such a Presbyterial combination, we did not imagine. We found also those Non-conformists (that wrote against the Episcopal Government) in their Answer to the Arguments used for Episcopal Government over many Churches, brought from the instances of the multitude of Beleevers at Jerusalem, and other places and cities, mentioned in the New Testament, to assert that it could not be infallibly proved that any of those vve reade of in the Acts and elsewhere; vvere yet so numerous, as necessarily to exceed the limits of one particular congre- [p.14] gation in those first times. We found it also granted by them all, that there should be several Elders in every congregation, who had power over them in the Lord; and we judged that all those precepts, obey your Elders, and them that are over you, were (to be sure, and all grant it) meant of the Pastours and Teachers, and other Elders that were set over them in each particular congregation respectively, and to be as certainly the intendment of the holy Ghost, as in those like commands, Wives obey your owne husbands, Servants your own governours, to be meant of their several Families respectively.

We could not therefore but judge it a safe and an allowed way to retaine the government of our severall congregations for matter of discipline within themselves, to be exercised by their own Elders, whereof we had (for the most part of the time we were abroad) three at least in each congregation, whom we were subject to: yet not clayming to our selves an independent power in every congregation, to give account or be subject to none others, but onely a ful and entire power compleat within our selves, until we should be challenged to erre grosly; such as Corporations enjoy, who have the power and priviledge to passe sentence for life & death within themselves, and yet are accountable to the State they live in. But that it should be the institution of Christ or his Apostles, that the combination of the Elders of many Churches should be the first compleat and entire seat

of Church power over each congregation so combined; or that they could challenge and assume [p.15] that authority over those Churches they feed and teach not ordinarily by virtue of those fore-mentioned Apostolicall precepts was to us a question, and judged to be an additament unto the other, which therefore rested on those that allowed us what we practised, over and above, to make evident and demonstrate (and certainly of all other the challenge of all spiritual power from Christ had need have a cleare pattent to shew for it) Yea wee appeale further unto them that have read bookes, whether untill those latter wrytings of the two reverend and learned Divines of Scotland set forth after our return, nor much more then two yeeres since, and others of no elder date from Holland, and one our own Divines more lately written with much learning and ingenuity; there hath been much settly and directly or with strength insisted on to prove that governement; and although assert and inculcate it they do as their opinions, yet the full strength and streame of our Non-conformists wrytings and others are spent rather in arguments against, & for the overthrowing the Episcopall government, and corruptions that cleave to our worship, and in maintayning those severall Officers in Churches which Christ hath instituted in stead thereof (in which we fully agree with them) then in the proofe of a combined classicall Presbyteriall government as it is authoritatively practised in the most reformed Churches.

And whereas the common prejudice and exception laid into all mens thoughts against us and our opinions is, that in such a congregationall govern- [p.16] ment thus entire within it self, there is no allowed sufficient remedy for miscarriages, though never so grosse; no reliefe for wrongful sentences or persons injured thereby; no roome for complaints: no powerful or effectual means to reduce a Church or Churches that fal into heresie, schisme, &c. but every one is left and may take liberty without controule to do what is good in their own eyes; we have (through the good providence of God upon us) from the avowed declarations of our judgements among our Churches mutually during our exile, and that also confirmed by the most solemne instance of our practice, wherewith to vindicate our selves and way in this particualr; which upon no other occasion we should ever have made this publique.

God so ordered it that a scandall and offence fell out between those very Churches whilst living in this banishment (whereof we our selves, that write these things, were then the Ministers) one of our Churches having unhappily deposed one of their Ministers, the other judged it not onely as too suddaine an act (having proceeded in a matter of so great moment without consulting their sister Churches, as was publiquely professed we should have done in such cases of concernement) but also in the proceedings thereof as too severe, and not managed according to the rules laid down in the word. In this case our Churches did mutually and universally acknowledge and submit to this as a sacred and undoubted principle and supreame law to be observed among all Churches, that as by [p.17] virtue of that Apostolical command, Churches as wel as particular men are bound to give no offence neither to Iew nor Gentile, nor the Churches of God they live amongst. So that in all cases of such offence or difference, by the obligation of the comon law of comunion of Churches, & for the vindication of the glory of Christ, which in comon they hold forth, the church or churches chalenged to offend or differ, are to submit themselves (upon the challenge of the offence or complaint of the person wronged) to the most full & open tryall & examination by other

neighbour Churches offended thereat, of what ever hath given the offence: And further, that by the virtue of the same and like law of not partaking in other mens sins, the Churches offended may & ought upon the impenitency of those Churches, persisting in their errour and miscarriage to pronounce that heavy sentence, against them, of withdrewing and renouncing all Christian communion with them until they do repent; And further to declare and protest this, with the causes thereof, to all other Churches of Christ, that they may do the like.

And what further authority, or proceedings purely Ecclesiasticall, of one, or many sister Churches towards another whole Church, or Churches offending, either the Scriptures doe hold forth, or can rationally be put in execution (without the Magistrates interposing a power of another nature, unto which we upon his particular cognisance, and examination of such causes, professe ever to submit, and also to be most vvilling to have recourse unto) for our parts vve savv not then, nor do yet see. And [p.18] likewise we did then suppose, and doe yet, that this principle of submission of Churches that miscarry unto other Churches offended, together with this other, that it is a command from Christ enjoyned to Churches that are finally offended to denounce such a sentence of Non-communion and withdrawing from them whilst impenitent, as unworthy to hold forth the name of Christ, (these principles being received and generally acknowledged by the Churches of Christ to be a mutuall duty, as strictly enjoyned them by Christ as any other) that these would be as effectuall means (though the blessing of Christ) to awe and preserve Churches and their Elders in their duties, as that other of claime to an authoritative power Ecclesiastical to Excommunicate other Churches or their Elders offending; For if the one be compared with the other, in a meere Ecclesiastial [sic] notion, That of Excommunication pretended hath but this more in it, That it is a delivering of whole Churches and their Elders offending unto Satan, (for which we know no warrant in the Scriptures, that Churches should have such a power over other Churches) And then as for the binding obligation both of the one way & the other, it can be supposed to lye but in these 2. things; First, in a warrant and infunction given by Christ to his Churches, to put either the one or the other into execution; and 2. that mens consciences be accordingly taken therewith, so as to subject themselves whether unto the one way or the other: For suppose that other principle of an authoritative power in the greater part of Churches [p.19] combined to excommunicate other Churches, &c. to be the ordinance of God, yet unlesse it does take hold of mens consciences, and be received amongst all Churches, the offending Churches will sleight all such Excommunications as much, as they may be supposed to doe our way of protestation and sentence of Non-communion. On the other side, let this way of ours be but as strongly entertained, as that which is the way and command of Christ, and upon all occasions be heedfully put in execution, it will awe mens consciences as much, and produce the same effects. And if the Magistrates power (to which we give as much, and (as we think) more, then the principles of the Presbiteriall government will suffer them to yeeld) doe but assist and back the sentence of other Churches denouncing this Non-communion against Churches miscarrying, according to the nature of the crime, as they judge meet, and as they would the sentence Churches excommunicating other Churches in such cases, upon their own particular judgement of the cause; then, without all controversie this our way of Church proceeding wil be every way as effectuall as their other can be supposed to be; and we are sure, more

brotherly and more suited to that liberty and equality Christ hath endowed his Churches with. But without the Magistrates interposing their authority, their way of proceeding will be as ineffectuall as ours; and more lyable to contempt, by how much it is pretended to be more authoritative; and to inflict a more dreadful punishment, which carnall spirits are seldome sensible of. This for our judgements.

[p.20] And for a reall evidence and demonstration both that this was then, our judgement, as likewise for an instance of the effectuall successe of such a course held by Churches in such cases, our own practice, and the blessing of God thereon, may plead and testifie for us to all the world. The manage of this transaction in briefe was this.

That Church which (with others) was most scandalized, did by letters declare their offence, requiring of the Church (supposed to be) offending, in the name and for the vindication of the honour of Christ, and the releeving the party wronged, to yeeld a full and publique hearing before all the Churches of our Nation, or any other whomsoever, offended, of what they could give in charge against their proceedings in that deposition of their Minister, and to subject themselves to an open tryall and review of all those forepassed carriages that concerned that particular; which they most cheerfully and readily (according to the fore-mentioned principles) submitted unto, in a place, and state where no outward violence or any other externall authority either civil or ecclesiasticall would have enforced them thereunto; And accordingly the Ministers of the Church offended with other two Gentlemen, of much worth, wisdom and piety, members thereof, were sent as Messengers from that Church; and at the introduction and entrance into that solemne assembly (the solemnity of which hath left as deep an impression upon our hearts of Christs dreadfull presence as ever any we have been present at,) it was openly and publiquely pro- [p.21] fessed in a speech that was the preface to that discussion, to this effect, "That it was the most to be abhorred maxime that any Religion hath ever made profession of, and therefore of all other the most contradictory and dishonourable unto that of Christianity, that a single and particular society of men professing the name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a power from Christ to judge them that are of the same body and society within themselves, should further arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving account or being censurable by any other, either Christian Magistrate above them, or neighbour Churches about them." So far were our judgements from that independent liberty that is imputed to us, then, when we had least dependency on this kingdom, or so much as hopes ever to abide therein in peace. And for the issue and successe of this agitation, after there had been for many dayes as judiciary and full a charge, tryall, and deposition of witnesses openly afore all commers of all sorts, as can be expected in any Court where Authority enjoyns it, that Church, which had offended, did as publiquely acknowledge their sinfull aberration in it, restored theit [sic] Minister to his place again, and ordered a solemn day of fasting to humble themselves afore God and men, for their sinfull carriage in it; and the party also which had been deposed did acknowledge to that Church wherein he had likwise sinned.

Thus we have rendred some smal account of those, the saddest days of our pilgrimage on earth, wherein [p.22] although we enjoyed God, yet besides many other miseries (the companions of banishment) we lost some friends and companions, our fellow labourers in the Gospel, as

precious men as this earth beares any, through the distemper of the place, and our selves came hardly off that service with our healths, yea lives.

When it pleased God to bring us his poor Exiles back again in these revolutions of the times, as also of the condition of this kingdom, into our own land, (the pouring forth of manifold prayers and teares for the prosperity whereof, had been no small part of that publique worship we offered up to God in a strange land;) we found the judgement of many of our godly learned brethren in the Ministery (that desired a general reformation) to differ from ours in some things, wherein we do professedly judge the Calvinian Reformed Churches of the first reformation from out of Popery, to stand in need of a further reformation themselves; And it may without prejudice to them, or the imputation of Schisme in us from them, be thought, that they comming new out of Popery (as well as England) and the founders of that reformation not having Apostolique infallibility, might not be fully perfect the first day. Yea and it may hopefully be conceived, that God in his secret, yet wise and gracious dispensation, had left England more unreformed as touching the outward form, both of worship & Church government, then the neighbour Churches were, having yet powerfully continued a constant conflict and con- **[p.23]** tention for a further Reformation for these foure-score yeers; during which time he had likewise in stead thereof blessed them with the spiritual light (and that encreasing) of the power of Religion in the Practique part of it, shining brighter and clearer then in the neighbour Churches, as having in his infinite mercy on purpose reserved and provided some better thing for this Nation when it should come to be reformed, that the other Churches might not be made perfect without it, as the Apostle speaks.

We found also (which was as great an affliction to us as our former troubles and banishment) our opinions and wayes (wherein we might seem to differ) environed about with a cloud of mistakes and misapprehensions, and our persons with reproaches, Besides other calumnies, as of schisme, &c. (which yet must either relate to a differing from the former Ecclesiastical Government of this Church established, and then who is not involved in it as well as we?) or to that constitution and government that is yet to come; and untill that be agreed on, established and declared, and actually exist, there can be no guilt or imputation of Schime [sic] from it) That proud and insolent title of Independencie was affixed unto us, as our claime; the very sound of which conveys to all mens apprehensions the challenge of an exemption of all Churches from all subjection and dependance, or rather a trumpet of defiance against what ever Power, Spirituall or Civill; which we doe abhor and detest: Or else the odious name of Brownisme, together with all their opinions as they have stated and maintai- **[p.24]** ned them, must needs be owned by us: Although upon the very first declaring our judgements in the chief and fundamental point of all Church discipline, and likewise since, it hath been acknowledged that we differ much from them. And wee did then, and doe here publiquely professe, we beleeve the truth to lye and consist in a middle way betwixt that which is falsly charged on us, Brownisme; and that which is the contention of these times, the authoritative Presbyteriall Government in all the subordinations and proceedings of it.

And had we been led in our former wayes, and our removall out of this Kingdome by any such spirit of faction and division, or of pride and singularity, (which are the usual grounds of all Schisme) we had since our returns again during this intermisticall season, tentations, yea provocations enough to have drawn forth such a spirit; having manifold advantages to make and encrease a partie, which we have not in the least attempted. We found the spirits of the people of this Kingdome that professe or pretend to the power of godlinesse (they finding themselves to be so much at liberty, and new come out of bondage) ready to take away any impressions, and to be cast into any mould that hath but the appearance of a stricter way. And we found that many of those mists that had gathered about us, or were rather cast upon our persons in our absence, began by our presence againe, and the blessing of God upon us, in a great measure to scatter and vanish, without speaking a word for our selves or Cause.

[p.25] But through the grace of Christ, our spirits are and have been so remote from such dispostions & aymes, that on the contrary we call God and men to witnes our constant forbearance, either to publish our opinions by preaching (although we had the Pulpits free) or to print any thing of our owne or others for the vindication of our selves (although the Presses were more free then the Pulpits) or to act for our selves or way, although we have been from the first provoked unto all these all sorts of wayes, both by the common mis-understandings and mis-representations of our opinions and practises, together with incitements to this State not to allow us the peaceable practises of our Consciences, which the Reformed Churches abroad allowed us, and these edged with calumnies and reproaches cast upon our persons in print; and all these heightned with this further prejudice and provocation, that this our silence was interpreted, that we were either ashamed of our opinions, or able to say little for them; when as on the other side (besides all other advantages) Books have been written by men of much worth, learning, and authority, with moderation and strength, to prepossesse the peoples minds against what are supposed our Tenets. But we knew and considered that it was the second blow that makes the quarrell, and that the beginning of strife would have been as the breaking in of waters; and the sad and conscientious apprehension of the danger of rending and dividing the godly Protestant party in this Kingdome that were desirous of Reformation, and of making se- [p.26] verall interests among them in a time when there was an absolute necessity of their neerest union and conjunction, and all little enough to effect that Reformation intended, and so long contended for, against a common adversary that had both present possession to plead for it selfe, power to support it, and had enjoyed a long continued settlement which had rooted it in the hearts of men; And this seconded by the instant and continuall advices and conjurements of many Honourable, wise, and godly Personages of both Houses of Parliament, to forbeare what might any way be like to occasion or augment this unhappy difference; They having also by their Declarations to His Majesty professed their endeavour and desire to unite the Protestant partie in this Kingdome, that agree in Fundamentall Truths against Popery and other Heresies, and to have that respect to tender consciences as might prevent oppressions and inconveniences which had formerly been; Together with that strict engagement willingly entred into by us for these common ends, with the rest of our brethren of the Ministery, (which though made to continue but ad placitum, yet hath been sacred to us.) And above all, the due respect we have had to the peaceable and orderly

Reformation of his Church and State; the hopfull expectation we have been entertained with of an happy latitude and agreement by means of this Assembly, and the wisdome of this Parliament: The conscience and consideration of all these, and the weight of each, have hitherto had more power with us to this deepe silence and forbearance, then- [p.27] all our own interests have any way prevailed with us to occasion the least disturbance amongst the people. We have and are yet resolved to beare all this with a quiet and a strong patience, (in the strength of which we now speak, or rather sigh forth this little) referring the vindication of our persons [*] God, and a further experience of us by men; [*]nd the declaration of our judgements, and what we conceive to be his truth therein, to the due and orderly agitation of this Assembly whereof both Houses were pleased to make us Members.

And whereas our silence upon all the forementioned grounds (for which we know we can never lose esteeme with good and wise men) hath been by the ill interpretation of some, imputed either to our consciousnesse of the badnesse and weaknesse of our Cause, or to our unability to maintain what we assert in difference form others, or answer what hath been written by others, wee shall (with all modesty) onely present this to all mens apprehensions in confutation of it. That what ever the truth and justnesse of our Cause may prove to be, or how slender our abilities to defend it, yet wee pretend at least to so much wisdome, that wee would never have reserved our selves for, but rather by all wayes have declined this Theatre, of all other, the most judicious and severe, and Assembly of so many able, learned, and grave Divines, where much of the piety, wisdome, and learning of two Kingdomes are met in one, honoured and assisted with the presence of the Worthies of both Houses at all debates (as often as they please to vouchsafe [p.28] their presence) as the Stage whereon first wee would bring forth into publique view our Tenets (if false and counterfet [sic]) together with our own folly and weaknesse: We would much rather have chosen to have been venting them to the multitude, apt to be seduced, (which we have had these three yeers opportunity to have done.) But in a conscientious regard had to the orderly and peaceable way of searching our truths, and reforming the Churches of Christ, we have adventured our selves upon this way of God, wisely assumed by the prudence of the State; And therein also upon all sorts of disadvantages (which we could not but foresee) both of number, abilities of learning, Authority, the streame of publique interest; Trusting God both with our selves and his own truth, as he shall be pleased to manage it by us.

Moreover, if in all matters of Doctrine, we were not as Orthodoxe in our judgements as our brethren themselves, we would never have exposed our selves to this tryall and hazard of discovery in this Assembly, the mixture of whose spirits, the quick-sightednes of whose judgements (intent enough upon us) and variety of debates about all sorts of controversies afoot in these times of contradiction, are such, as would be sure soon to find us out if we nourished any monsters or Serpents of opinions lurking in our bosomes. And if we had carryed it so, as that hitherto such errours were not aforehand open to the view and judgement of all, yet sitting here (unlesse we would be silent, which we have not been) we could not long be hid. But it is [p.29] sufficiently known that in all points of doctrine (which hitherto in the review and examination of the Articles of our Church, or upon other occasions have been gone thorough) our judgements have still concurred with the greatest part of our brethren, neither do we know wherein we have dissented. And in matters of Discipline (which we

are now upon) when our judgements cannot in all things concur with others (as indeed not others all, in all things amongst themselves) yet we are so farre from holding up the differences that occur, or making the breaches greater or wider, that we endeavour upon all such occasions to grant and yeeld (as all may see and cannot but testifie for us) to the utmost latitude of our light and consciences; professing it to be as high a point of Religion and conscience readily to own, yea fall down before whatsoever is truth in the hands of those that differ, yea though they should be enemies unto us, as much as earnestly to contend for & hold fast those truths wherein we should be found dissenting from them; and this as in relation to peace, so also as a just due to truth and goodnes, even to approve it & acknowledge it to the utmost graine of it, though mingled with what is opposite unto us. And further when matters by discussion are brought to the smallest dissent that may be, we have hitherto been found to be no backward urgers unto a temper (not onely in things that have concerned our own consciences, but when of others also) such as may suit and tend to union as well as searching out of truth; judging this to be as great and usefull an end of Synods [p.30] and Assemblies, as a curious and exact discussion of all sorts of lesser differences with binding Determinations of truth one way.

And thus we have nakedly and with all simplicity rendred a cleare and true account of our wayes and spirits hitherto; Which we made choice of now at first to make our selves known by, rather then by a more exact and Scholastique relation of our judgements in the points of difference about Church government; reserving that unto the more proper season and opportunity of this Assembly, and that liberty given by both Honourable Houses in matters of dissent; or as necessity shall after require, to a more publique way of stating and asserting of them. In the meane time from this briefe historicall relation of our practices, there may a true estimate be taken of our opinions in difference, which being instanced in, and set out by practices, is the most reall and least collusive way, and carries its own evidence with it. All which we have taken the boldnes together with our selves humbly to lay at the feet of your wisdom and piety; Beseeching you to look upon us under no other Notion, or character, then as those, who if we cannot assume to have been no way furtherers of that reformation you intend, yet who have been no way hinderers thereof, or disturbers of the publique peace; and who in our judgements about the present work of this age, the reformation of worship and discipline, do differ as little from the Reformed Churches, and our Brethren, yea far lesse, then they do from what themselves were three yeers past, or then the [p.31] generallity of this kingdom from it self of late. And withall to consider us as those, who in those former times, for many yeers suffered even to exile, for what the kingdom it self now suffers in the endeavour to cast out; and who in the present times and since the change of them, have endured (that which to our spirits is no lesse grievous) the opposition and reproach of good men, even to the threatning [sic] of another banishment, and have been through the grace of God upon us, the same men in both, in the midst of these varieties; And finally, as those that do pursue no other interest or designe but a subsistance (be it the poorest and meanest) in our own land (where we have and may do further service, & which is our birth-right as we are men) with the enjoyment of the ordinances of Christ (which are our portion as we are Christians) with the allowance of a

latitude to some lesser differences with peaceablenesse, as not knowing where else with safety, health, and livelyhood, to set our feet on earth.

Tho: Goodwin, Jer: Burroughes,
Philip Nye,
Sidrach Simpson William Bridge.

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